DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 360 495 CE 064 149

AUTHOR Koch, Richard
TITLE Vocational Education in France--Structural Problems and Present Efforts towards Reform. CEDEFOP Document.
INSTITUTION European Centre for the Development of Vocational Training, Berlin (Germany).
REPORT NO ISBN-92-825-9198-0
PUB DATE 89
NOTE 120p.
AVAILABLE FROM European Community Information Service, 2100 M Street, N.W., Suite 707, Washington, DC 20037 (Catalogue No. HX-54-88-110-EN-C; also available in German and French).
PUB TYPE Reports - Research/Technical (143)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC05 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS Apprenticeships; Articulation (Education); *Change Strategies; Comparative Analysis; Demography; *Educational Change; Educational Policy; Educational Trends; *Education Work Relationship; Employment Patterns; Foreign Countries; *Government School Relationship; Policy Formation; Public Policy; *School Business Relationship; Secondary Education; *Vocational Education
IDENTIFIERS *France; Germany

ABSTRACT

The structural problems present in vocational education in France and reform efforts under way to solve them were studied. Eighteen experts from government, science, and industry were interviewed, and statistics and other relevant publications were analyzed. The development of the French initial training system was outlined, and trends in demography, education, and employment as a platform for vocational training reform in France in the 1980s were examined. The educational policy debate on reform of the vocational education system and related state measures to improve the levels of general and vocational education, reduce the number of school dropouts, and increase the number of vocational baccalaureate holders were outlined along with efforts to restructure vocational education certificates and transitions within the education system. Efforts to strengthen the links between the vocational secondary schools and industry, upgrade industrial apprentice training, help integrate youth into working life, and develop new forms of state intervention within the vocational training system were examined. The analysis indicated that, despite their apparent convergence in recent years, the differences between the French and German vocational education systems are too great to permit successful assimilation of the German model in France in the foreseeable future. (Contains 40 references.) (MN)

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CEDEFOP Document

Vocational education in France — Structural problems and present efforts towards reform

European Centre for the Development of Vocational Training

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Vocational education in France — Structural problems and present efforts towards reform

Richard Koch

First edition, Berlin 1989

Published by:

CEDEFOP — European Centre for the Development of Vocational Training,
Jean Monnet House,
Bundesallee 22, **D-1000 Berlin 15**
Tel. (030) 88 41 20; Telex 184 163 eucen d;
Telefax (030) 88 41 22 22

The Centre was established by Regulation (EEC) No 337/75 of the Council of the European Communities

This publication is also available in the following languages:

DE ISBN 92-825-9197-2
FR ISBN 92-825-9199-9

Cataloguing data can be found at the end of this publication

Luxembourg: Office for Official Publications of the European Communities, 1989

ISBN 92-825-9198-0

Catalogue number: HX-54-88-110-EN-C

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Printed in Belgium

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Introduction

In the framework of its tasks in the field research and information, CEDEFOP publishes studies on the vocational training systems of the Member States, which are translated into all the Community languages as a contribution to improved understanding and knowledge of the problems and developments in the field of initial and continuing training in the Twelve. These studies are drawn up by a research institution commissioned by CEDEFOP in the relevant Member State.

At the same time and in complement to this, we also consider it of interest to reflect the points of view of vocational training researchers who have worked on the system of another EC Member State and can draw conclusions as to how they view the similarities and differences between the various systems and - in particular with a view to 1992 - the process of convergence between Member States.

The author of this report participated in a bilateral Franco-German exchange programme for vocational education researchers and in this context he spent several months at the CEREQ, Paris, in 1987.

We believe that the publication of this report will provide a further impetus for transnational research and cooperation and for the critical understanding of its readers - not least in France itself. The report is published in German, English and French.

Gesa Chomé
CEDEFOP

Preface

There have been increased efforts in France in recent years to upgrade the status of vocational education within the education system and to better adapt its structures to economic, technical and demographic change. Inadequate links between hitherto largely full-time school-based vocational education and the world of work have proven to be a key problem in this context. Greater involvement of industry in vocational education and an upgrade of industrial apprenticeship therefore belong to the major endeavours towards vocational training policy reform in France which are the subject of this report.

Despite the fact that the two systems have to a certain extent come closer together in terms of the organisation of vocational education, there are still considerable differences between the vocational training systems of France and the Federal Republic of Germany. In view of different historical developments and socio-political framework conditions specific to each national education system, the EC Member States can only come closer together in the field of vocational training in the framework of a definition of common objectives and solutions which at the same time must correspond to the specific national context.

The report originated from a scientific exchange between the Bundesinstitut für Berufsbildung in Berlin and the Centre d'Etudes et de Recherches sur les Qualifications

(CEREQ) in Paris. The author conducted several weeks of research at the CEREQ in the framework of an international exchange programme for vocational training researchers implemented by the Carl Duisberg society and financed by the Federal Ministry for Education and Science, Bonn.

Berlin, September 1988

H. Schmidt
Secretary General
Bundesinstitut für Berufsbildung
(Federal Vocational Training
Institute)

Preface

The French vocational training sytem has been going through a process of sweeping change for a number of years. The modernisation of educational contents, greater involvement of the firms in the vocational education process and the introduction of educational paths leading to higher-level vocational qualifications have been introduced to better coordinate vocational education with developments in the working world. Vocational education is increasingly regarded by industry as an important factor in securing its competitiveness.

With the perspective of a single European market from 1993, the development of national vocational training systems has gained an additional European - dimension. Mutual recognition and common organisation of vocational educational courses are but two examples in this context.

Convergence and cooperation among the EC Member States in the field of vocational training presuppose knowledge of the problems and solutions adopted in the other vocational training systems. A contribution can be made in this context by improved cooperation in the field of vocational training research and, in particular, the exchange of researchers, as commenced between the Bundesinstitut für Berufsbildung (BIBB) in Berlin/Bonn and the Centre d'Etudes et de Recherches sur les Qualifications (CEREQ) in Paris. The following report, which describes the present problems and trends in vocational

education in France from the point of view of a foreign observer, bears witness to this fact.

Paris, September 1988

J.-F. Germe
Deputy Director
CEREQ
(until 30.09.88)

Introduction

In France there is currently considerable interest in the vocational education system of the Federal Republic of Germany. The main issue in this context is how far the German dual system of vocational education can be considered a model for a reform of vocational education in France. On the other hand, in the Federal Republic interest in and substantiated knowledge of vocational education in France and its current development problems is largely restricted to a handful of vocational training experts.

Ever-closer economic relations between the two countries, not least with respect to the single European market, can similarly be expected to rouse increasing interest in the Federal Republic of Germany in the vocational education system of its neighbours across the Rhine. Consideration of the educational policy debates in recent years in France and the Federal Republic of Germany clearly shows that vocational education in both countries is in many respects confronted with similar economic and social challenges. Moreover, despite the differences between the two systems, it can also be observed to a certain extent that similar solutions have been sought to these problems.

Vocational education below university level is often described as the "Cinderella" of the French education system. This appraisal is on the one hand an expression of the fact that vocational education in France has traditionally been socially and culturally devalued in

comparison to general academic education. On the other hand, it demonstrates that, despite reinforced reform efforts in recent years, the policymakers in politics and industry have not yet managed to cope with the increasingly evident emergence of structural problems and functional deficiencies in the vocational education system in the context of critical developments in industry and on the job market.

Vocational education has nevertheless gained in importance in educational policy statements from the government, employers and trade unions in recent years. An effective vocational education system is expected to make an essential contribution to combatting the persistently high level of unemployment, especially among young people, and to strengthen the innovative capacity and competitiveness of the French economy, considered inadequate.

Not least with reference to the dual vocational training system of the Federal Republic of Germany and in the light of the considerable problems of French youngsters in the transition from school to working life, closer links between school and industry in vocational education constitute a keystone of present endeavours towards reform in France. The idea of school/industry alternance training is gaining increasing recognition. Similarly, apprentice training, largely restricted to small-scale companies in a number of crafts and trades industries, is to be reinforced and extended to other branches of the economy. However, in France the opinion that vocational education

is the task of the state school system is still widespread. Since there is no tradition of industrial vocational education in many sectors of the economy, the acknowledgement of the fact that a commitment of the firms in the field of vocational education is to be regarded as an investment in their own future is only gradually gaining ground.

The following report is less a description of the French vocational education system than an account of the structural changes within this system in recent years and the recent debate on the reform of vocational education. The report focuses on vocational education below higher education level.

The report is based on two months spent by the author at the "Centre de Recherche et des Etudes sur les Qualifications" (CEREQ) in Paris. Observations are based on interviews with experts from the field of science, ministries, industry and trade unions, the evaluation of statistics, relevant publications and other documents. At this point I should like to thank the persons I interviewed in France and above all my colleagues at the CEREQ for their valuable support. The author is naturally solely responsible for all the statements and comments contained in this report.

Chapter 1 gives an outline of the formal structure of the French initial vocational training system and its historical development.

Chapter 2 contains an account of the major quantitative trends in education and employment which constitute the essential parameters for present endeavours towards reform.

The main structural problems of the vocational education system emerging from the recent educational policy debate are the subject of chapter 3.

Chapter 4 discusses the most important proposals and state measures in the context of a reform of the vocational education system according to the main relevant fields.

Finally, chapter 5 examines the question of whether the French and German vocational education systems are coming closer together or whether such a development is to be expected.

1. The French initial training system

1.1 Formal structure

The French education system is divided into five cycles:

- voluntary pre-school education (école maternelle) up to age 6,
- primary school (école primaire) - 5 years,
- secondary level I (collège) - 4 years,
- secondary level II (vocational training or general academic branch),
- higher education (short or long courses of study).

Apart from the occupation-related courses at secondary level I, vocational education generally[1] begins at secondary level II once the learner has reached the school leaving age (16). Assuming that young people do not choose to enter directly into working life without a formal vocational qualification or opt for the track leading to a general academic "baccalauréat", a number of vocational education paths are open to them (Fig. 1):

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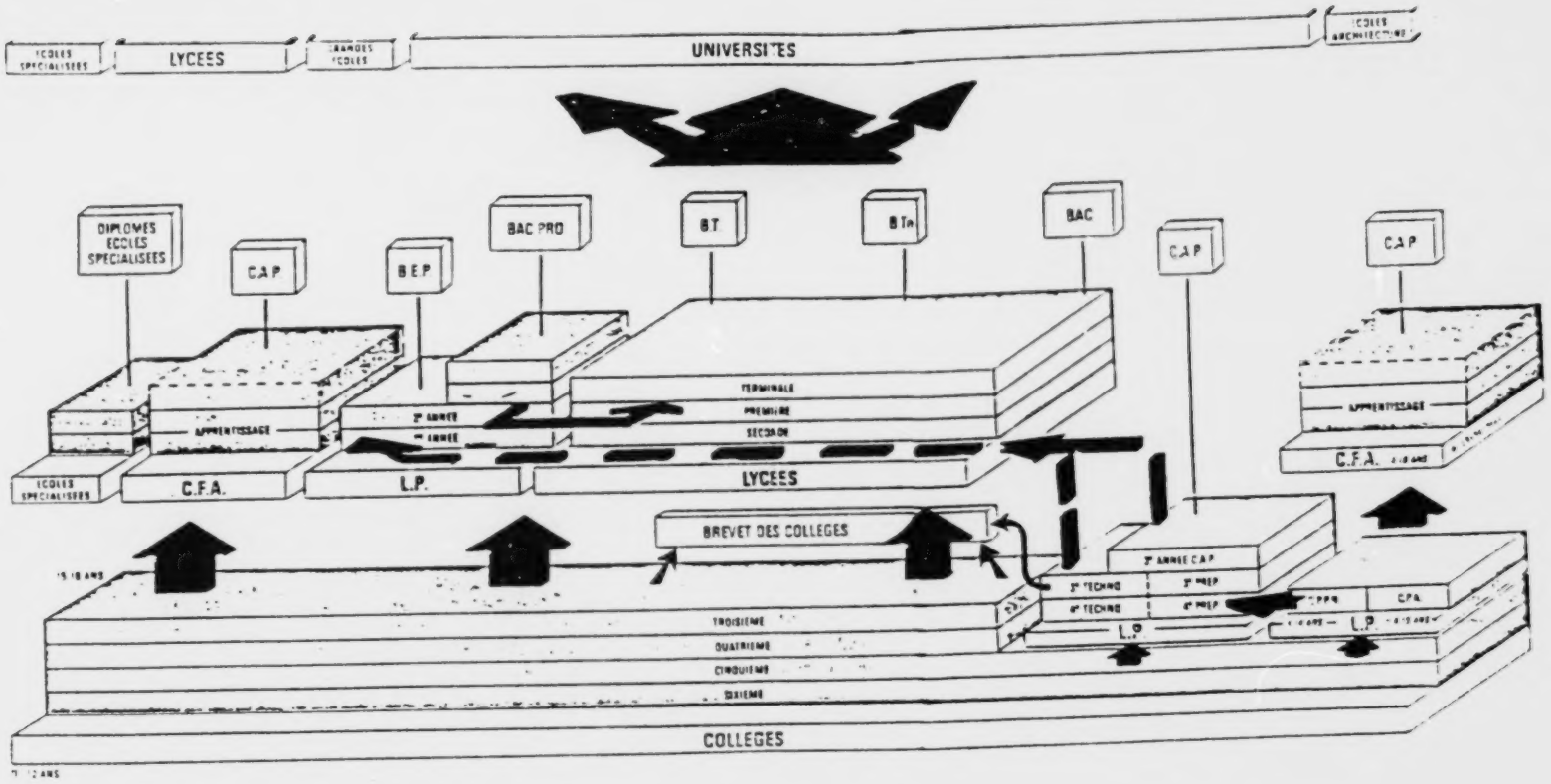
1) An exception is the three-year course leading to a CAP following the "cinquième".

Fig. 1: Structure of the French secondary education system



CPPN	CLASSE PREPROFESSIONNELLE DE NIVEAU
CPA	CLASSE PREPARATOIRE A L'APPRENTISSAGE
CAP	CERTIFICAT D'APTITUDE PROFESSIONNELLE
CFA	CENTRE DE FORMATION D'APPRENTIS
BEP	BREVET D'ETUDES PROFESSIONNELLES
LP	LYCEE PROFESSIONNEL
BT	BREVET DE TECHNICIEN
BAC PRO	BACCALAUREAT PROFESSIONNEL
BTn	BACCALAUREAT TECHNOLOGIQUE

- two year in-school courses at secondary level II at a vocational secondary school[1] ("lycée professionnel") leading to either the CAP ("certificat d'aptitude professionnelle"), geared towards a specific vocational specialisation, or the more versatile BEP ("brevet d'études professionnelles"). Both diplomas are aimed at skilled white- or blue-collar positions.

- an apprenticeship which takes the form of a sandwich course undergone in a training company and an apprentice training centre ("centre de formation d'apprentis" - CFA), generally lasting two years. Apprenticeship is traditionally concluded with the CAP[2].

- a new two-year course leading to the "vocational baccalauréat" ("baccalauréat professionnel"), introduced in the academic year 1985/86 with hitherto (1987/88) 14 specialisations at a "lycée professionnel" or via the

---

1) Since the "lycée professionnel" leads to a formal vocational training qualification prepared at school, the term "vocational secondary school" has been used in English.

2) Since 1987 it is theoretically possible to acquire higher vocational training diplomas - up to the vocational "baccalauréat" and even the BTS ("brevet de technicien supérieur") via the apprenticeship track. This could lead to an expansion of apprentice training above and beyond traditional crafts and trades and the retail trade (see 4.4).

apprentice route. The vocational "baccalauréat" aims at direct transition to a highly-qualified white- or blue-collar worker position.

- a three-year course leading to the technological "baccalauréat" (BTn) at a "lycée" of general academic and vocational education ("lycée d'enseignement général et technique") with a total of 16 occupation-related specialisations in 1987/88. The "bac. technologique" is primarily aimed at transition to short higher education. [1)]

- two-year short higher education leading to
  - a higher technical certificate ("brevet de technicien supérieur" - BTS) at a "section de technicien supérieur" (STS) at a "lycée" or
  - a university diploma of technology ("diplôme universitaire de technologie" - DUT) at an "institut universitaire de technologie" (IUT).

- three to eight years of long higher education at a university or a "grande école" (elitist university).

---

1) The three-year course leading to the "brevet de technicien" (BT) diploma, highly specialised with 68 specialisations in 1987/88, which relatively few young people actually prepared, is to be abolished under a law of 23 December 1986.

1.2 A brief historical review[1)]

Throughout the Ancien Régime up to the French Revolution, apprenticeship was the only vocational training path for qualified workers. The abolition of the guilds in the wake of the French Revolution and bûrgeoning economic liberalism led to a decline in the apprenticeship system. Employers considered apprenticeship unnecessary and too expensive for the purposes of labour in the manufacturing industries. Classical apprenticeship only survived in a handful of branches of economic activity in which mass production was not possible. The industrial age, characterised by mechanisation and a marked division of labour, initially generated a demand for engineers and workers capable of supervising others. Apart from a few large enterprises in which factory schools were established, it was not industry but the state which met this new need for vocational training by introducing a higher level of school-based vocational training, quite distinct from the apprenticeship system. The basis for a vocational training school system was thus established.

The problem of the vocational training of the working masses of white- and blue-collar workers was to remain unsolved for many years. Workers and employees either received no training at all, or were trained on-the-job. In the aftermath of World War I, the state attempted to

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1) For further details, see CEDEFOP (1982); CHARLOT/FIGEAT 1985, PROST 1968, SCHRIEWER (1982).

overcome the great dearth of skilled workers with the introduction of the Astier Law of 25 July 1919. This law made it compulsory for the municipalities to provide gratuitous vocational courses ("cours professionnels"), comprising both general education and basic vocational training, to apprentices and young workers under 18 years of age; employers were obliged to release youngsters to attend these courses during working hours. A vocational training certificate (CAP) could be acquired after three years. The Budgetary Law of 13 July 1925 imposed an apprenticeship tax of o.2 % of enterprises' total payroll to finance these vocational schools. Despite the possibility of exemption for enterprises which earmarked corresponding sums for vocational training purposes, the quality of practical in-plant training remained very low and vocational schooling was only attended by a proportion of young people.

The commitment of the enterprises to vocational training remained inadequate following the Second World War and the "apprenticeship training crisis" remained unsolved. The state responded with the expansion of full-time in-school vocational training, implemented with a broad consensus between the state, i.e. the Ministry of Education, and industry. The Ministry of Education then at empted to reinforce its monopoly in the field of education and training and industry was thus relieved of the costs of vocational training which was increasingly integrated into the secondary level of the general education system and directed towards the latter's selection criteria, education-

al standards and value system. In this context a shift in emphasis could in particular be noted from vocational training/practical and manual skills to theoretical and general academic educational goals. Industrial apprenticeship only maintained its position as a dominant form of training in small companies in traditional crafts sectors, the construction industry and trade. Moreover, since in the eyes of society it degenerated into the poor relation of general academic "lycée" education, the full-time vocational school's development was characterised by unfavourable conditions (frequent insufficiency of materials and personnel, student recruitment on the basis of negative selection in the schools of general education).

The apprenticeship training system was reformed by the Law of 16 July 1971. This law introduced, among others, stricter rules on apprentice contracts, a compulsory sandwich course at the newly created apprenticeship training centres, continued inspection of training in these centres and enterprises and the imposition of an apprenticeship tax equivalent to 0.5 % of employers' total wage bill. Apprenticeship nevertheless remained limited to only several sectors of the economy and retained its inferior position to that of full-time school-based vocational training.

The further course of reform of the vocational training system since the mid-1970's to be examined in detail below was essentially influenced by the crises in the economy and on the labour market since the end of the

post-war boom period. The key problem was and remains the adaptation of a vocational training system, which largely evolved in times of economic prosperity, to radically changed economic and social parameters.

2. Trends in demography, education and employment as a platform for vocational training reform in the 1980's

2.1. Demographic trends

Post-war French demographic trends have followed a more steady pattern than in the Federal Republic of Germany: the annual number of births rose from 802 000 to 862 000 in the period 1955 - 1965. Despite a decline in the birth-rate from 1973, there is no clear-cut downward trend to be observed. 745 000 children were born in 1975, 800 000 in 1980 and 740 000 in 1984 (I.N.S.E.E., 1985a). I.N.S.E.E.'s forecast for the year 2000 (1986) lies between 707 000 and 824 000 births.

Whereas the number of 15 - 24-year-olds climbed considerably in the 1960's, it has only edged up slightly since 1975 to reach 8.5 million in 1987. I.N.S.E.E. expects this number to fall by approx. 1 million by the year 2000 (C.E.S., 1987a)[1].

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1) A decline in this age-bracket of 3.4 million to 5.3 million is expected in the Federal Rpublic of Germany in the same period (BUNDESMINISTER FÜR BILDUNG UND WISSENSCHAFT, 1986).

2.2. Young people in education and training

The total number of pupils and students[1)] rose by approx. 0.9 million to approx. 11.5 million between academic years 1973/74 and 1985/86; this increase is mainly due to the trend whereby young people are staying on longer at school. The number of learners in education and training in 1986 corresponded to a proportion of 20.7 % of the overall population (55.2 million as of 1 January 1986), only a slight increase compared to the mid-1970's (I.N.S.E.E., 1987a).

In academic year 1985/86, a total of 818 000 pupils were enrolled in full-time school-based education courses leading to the CAP or BEP at a vocational secondary school ("lycée professionnel"); 1 209 000 pupils were preparing for a general academic or specialised "baccalauréat"; 1 522 000 students were matriculated in short or long higher education and 213 000 youngsters were serving an industrial apprenticeship.

The overall situation of young people in the 16 - 25 age-bracket in the years 1983 - 1986 is illustrated in Table 1:

- The proportion of pupils and students within the entire 16 - 25 age-bracket climbed 3.2 percentage points

1) Pupils from primary level, excluding those at agricultural schools and apprentices.

between 1983 and 1986 to reach 33.1 % in March 1986.

- The low proportion of apprentices remained unchanged at 2.5 %.

- The proportion of young people in this age-bracket in employment fell by 5.2 percentage points to 36.1 % in the same period.

- The proportion of the unemployed among the 16 - 25-year-olds rose by 1.7 percentage points to 11.5 % (12.4 % in March 1985)[1].

- Government-sponsored training and employment schemes (see 4.5) were substantially expanded. The proportion of young participants in such programmes doubled in the period under consideration to reach 5.7 % in March 1986 (3.1 % in March 1985). The slight decline in youth unemployment since 1986 is to be viewed in this context.

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1) This proportion of unemployed young people should not be confused with the unemployment rate among young people (see 2.4) with reference to the gainfully employable population in this age-group.

Table 1: The situation of youngsters aged 16 - 25.

	March 1983 %	March 1984 %	March 1985 %	March 1986 %
Pupil, student	29,9	30,9	32,0	33,1
Apprentice	2,6	2,5	2,5	2,5
Participant in a government-sponsored training and employment scheme	2,7	2,8	3,1	5,6
Employed (in the real sense)	41,3	38,8	37,0	36,1
Military service	2,9	2,7	2,9	2,9
Unemployed	9,8	11,9	12,4	11,5
Idle	6,8	6,7	6,6	5,9
Remaining statistical balance[1)]	3,9	3,7	3,5	2,5
Total (millions) = 100 %	8,58	8,58	8,55	8,53

Source: I.N.S.E.E. Economie et Statistique Nr. 193/194, Nov./Dec. 1986

1) It was not possible to determine this proportion of young people in the survey. It is therefore e.g. estimated that the actual proportion of unemployed youngsters is 0.1 % higher, the proportion of those idle 0.6 % higher and the proportion of young people in employment 0.8 % higher.

Table 2 demonstrates a clear trend towards higher educational and vocational training certificates[1]:

- There is a marked increase in the proportion of those leaving tertiary level courses (with or without a final certificate) (25.1 % in 1975 - 31.7 % in 1984).

- In 1984 almost every second youngster (46.7 %) left the education system at level V (41.7 % in 1975); however, of these 375 000 youngsters, only 70 % had a CAP or BEP certificate.

---

1) Educational paths are classified according to six different educational levels in France:

Levels VI and V a:	Those leaving after completion of compulsory education (16 years of age) before reaching the final class of a CAP or BEP course.
Level V:	Those leaving the final class of a CAP or BEP course (with or without apprenticeship) or drop-outs from courses preparing for a "baccalauréat" before reaching the final class.
Level IV (secondary):	Those leaving who have reached the final class of a course preparing for a general academic or vocational training "baccalauréat" (with or without a "baccalauréat").
Level IV (higher):	Drop-outs from higher education.
Level III:	Short higher education diploma ("baccalauréat" and 2 years).
Levels II + I:	Long higher education diploma from a university or a "grande école".

- The proportion of those leaving at the lowest training level (levels VI and V a) plummeted from 22.3 % in 1975 to 10.5 % in 1984. This figure nevertheless represents some 84 000 youngsters with extremely poor job prospects (I.N.S.E.E.,1987 b). Moreover, the proportion of this group of leavers seems to have been stagnating at this persistently high level since the early 1980's.

Table 2: Those leaving general education and vocational training paths (including apprenticeship) according to the educational level attained.

Level	1975	1980	1984
Those leaving secondary education paths	74,9	72,8	68,3
of these:			
- Levels VI and V a	22,3	13,2	10,5
- Level V	41,7	48,8	46,7
- Level IV (secondary)	10,9	10,8	11,1
Those leaving tertiary education paths (total)	25,1	27,2	31,7
of these:			
- Level IV (higher)	7,2	7,2	10,0
- Level III	7,7	10,1	10,0
- Levels II & I	10,2	9,9	11,7
Total of those leaving the various educational paths (in thousands) = 100 %	764	805	803

Source: CEREQ/I.N.S.E.E./SPRESE: Biland Formation - Emploi 1984

2.3. Transition from school to working life

From March 1984 and March 1985 787 000 pupils left the school system, 44 % of these without a leaving certificate or a diploma. 22.9 % had attained a CAP or BEP certificate, 15.5 % a "baccalauréat" and 17.6 % a diploma of short or long higher education.

Transition to employment is essentially influenced by the level of the diploma attained.[1] It can be observed in this context that the higher the level of the diploma, the greater the prospects of finding a job and the lower the risk of unemployment (Table 3):

Table 3 (see next page)

1) Unlike the Ministry of Education's "Bilan Formation-Emploi", based on a training level nomendature, the "Enquête sur l'Emploi" differentiates the level of educational certificates attained.

Table 3: Transition from school-based education (excluding apprenticeship) to working life according to the level of the highest certificate attained, academic year 1984/85.

Diploma level	No diploma	CAP/BEP	"bac."	Short or long higher education diploma
Total no. of leavers (= 100 %)	346 000	180 000	122 000	139 000
Transition to:				
- Military Service(%)	5,3	11,7	14,1	19,9
- Inactivity	6,9	1,6	4,3	2,4
- Industrial apprenticeship	30,0	-	-	-
- Work Experience[1)]	10,1	5,1	9,3	11,2
- Unemployment	29,4	42,2	24,9	11,3
- Employment[2)]	17,3	39,4	47,3	55,1
Occupational status in employment (%)				
- Unskilled worker	34,2	25,6	5,7	1,2
- Skilled worker	11,4	17,2	2,4	1,1
- Employee in crafts/ trades and person-related services	19,6	14,0	11,5	3,0
- Administrative employees	18,4	32,7	38,2	16,6
- "Professions intermédiaires" (teachers, clerical staff, technician, master craftsmen, etc.	8,1	5,1	36,4	48,9
- Managers and executives, liberal professions	0,7	0,6	2,5	28,5
- Farmers, traders, craftsmen, entrepreneurs	7,4	4,9	3,2	0,6

Source: I.N.S.E.E., 1987 b, the Institute's own calculations

1) proportion according to I.N.S.E.E., presumably underestimated.

2) including 19 000 in job creation schemes (TUC).

2.4. Youth unemployment

In 1986, the unemployment rate among young people under 25 was 25.1 % (men: 22.8 %, women: 27.5 %)[1]. In recent years youth unemployment has increased more sharply than overall unemployment. In 1986, the unemployment rate among men aged 15 - 24 was double and that of their female counterparts 2.5 x the average unemployment rate (Table 4). As already mentioned, the slight fall in youth unemployment since 1986 is not least due to the massive expansion of state integration programmes (see also 4.5).

Whereas at the end of the 1970's, in comparison to unemployed adults, young people managed to find a job relatively quickly, this situation has reversed in the 1980's. Of 100 unemployed men/women under 25 in 1976, 59/48 had found a job within a year; this number fell to 36 among the men and 32 among the women in 1983. By December 1986, the average duration of unemployment of young people aged under 25 was as long as 214 days (compared to 187 days in December 1982). Furthermore, an increasing trend towards temporary working contracts followed by renewed unemployment could be observed among youngsters (C.E.S., 1987 a, pp. 44); this is presumably due, among others, to the growing numbers of participants in state integration schemes.

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1) According to the unemployment rates adjusted according to seasonal factors and the influences of different national survey methods (EUROSTAT, 5/88), the unemployment rate among young people under 25 in 1986 was 25.0 % in France (men: 21.7 %, women: 28.5 %) and 7.9 % in the Federal Republic of Germany (men: 6.7 %, women: 9.1 %). Unemployment among the under-25's as a proportion of overall unemployment was 37.4 % in France and 23.6 % in the Federal Republic of Germany in April 1986.

Table 4: The 1976 and 1986 unemployment rates according to age groups.

Unemployment rates[1)]

Age	1976 total	1976 men	1976 women	1986 total	1986 men	1986 women
15 - 24	10,7	7,5	14,1	25,1	22,8	27,5
25 - 49	3,3	2,2	5,1	8,1	6,6	10,1
50 +	2,9	2,5	3,6	6,8	6,6	7,0
Total	4,5	3,1	6,7	10,2	8,7	12,3

Source: Enquête sur l'Emploi, 1976, 1986.

Many young people find themselves in a swift rotation between precarious working conditions and unemployment. Of the jobless youngsters registered in 1986, only 28 % were first job-seekers; 42% had already been engaged in a temporary employment contract (C.E.S., 1987 a, I.N.S.E.E., 1985 b).

The higher the level of the youngsters' educational or vocational training certificate, the lower the unemployment rate. Young people without a formal qualification are hardest hit by unemployment. More than one half of these youngsters have still failed to find a job nine months

1) The unemployment rate is calculated on the basis of the number of unemployed as a ratio of the gainfully employable population (employed and unemployed persons) in the corresponding age group.

after dropping out of their course. However the unemployment rate is also high among young people with a CAP or BEP certificate - in particular among the young women - nine months after the end of their course (Table 5).

Table 5: Unemployment rates nine months after leaving school

	School-leaving year	Level of diploma				
		No diploma %	CAP/BEP %	"Bac." %	Higher than "bac." %	Total %
Men	1982	54	36	26	17	37
	1983	59	49	32	17	44
	1984	57	45	30	13	42
Women	1982	59	52	32	11	40
	1983	63	62	35	11	44
	1984	69	57	36	20	49

Source: Bilan Formation-Emploi, 1982, 1983, 1984.

Although the unemployment rate among those leaving an apprenticeship nine months following completion of their training is somewhat lower than those leaving school-based vocational education at a comparable educational level (V), it is nevertheless considerable (Table 6). In particular among women and persons with no school-leaving certificate, apprenticeship seems to open up ever fewer opportunities for subsequent continued employment.

Table 6: The unemployment rate of former apprentices nine months after they leave the training company

Year of departure	Total %	Men %	Women %	CAP/BEP certificate %	No certificate %
1982	31	29	37	17	43
1983	42	36	54	38	54
1984	42	41	48	- 1)	-
1985	41	38	47	-	-

Source: Bilan Formation-Emploi, 1982, 1983, 1984, 1985.

2.5. Trends in manpower requirements and needs for vocational training

Like other industrial nations, France enjoyed a period of sustained, high economic growth in the post-war period up to 1973. This phenomenon was accompanied by an increase in the gainfully employed population in all branches of economic activity with the exception of the agricultural sector. Since the 1974/75 recession, the total number of gainfully employed persons has been approx. 21 million (21.5 million in 1986, total population: 55.2 million); at the same time there has been a sharp increase in the number of unemployed (to 2.5 million in 1987). A continuous swing towards the tertiary sector can also be observed. The proportion of the gainfully employed in the services

1) not indicated.

sector climbed from 51.1 % in January 1974 to 60.7 % in 1986. The proportion of gainfully employed persons in agriculture and in goods production fell by 2.6 and 7.5 percentage points respectively in the same period.

There has also been a significant change in the socio-professional composition of the gainfully employed population since the mid 1970's: whereas there has been a fall in the proportion of blue-collar workers, especially the unskilled, there has been a rise in the proportion of (skilled and unskilled) white-collar workers (without management functions) and highly skilled salaried employees and managerial staff (C.E.S., 1987, pp. 38 f).

A clear trend can be observed towards a higher level of formal education and training within the labour force. In 1987 the proportion of the labour force without a formal vocational training qualification or a "baccalauréat" was 47 %, compared to 56 % in 1982. This educational expansion also finds its expression in the fact that in 1987 two out of every three gainfully employed persons aged between 50 and 59 had no formal vocational training qualification or "baccalauréat", whereas this was only true of a good third (38 %) of the 15 - 24-year-old members of the labour force (I.N.S.E.E., 1987 c).

In a study on needs for vocational training in the year 2000, conducted on behalf of the "High Commission for Education and the Economy", the "Bureau d'Information et de Prévisions Economiques" (BIPE) predicts the following

changes in the qualification structure of all gainfully employed persons between 1982 and 2000, according to their educational level [1] (HCEE/BIPE, 1987):

- The proportion of gainfully employed persons with merely the lowest educational level (VI or V a) shall fall from 56 % in 1982 to 32 % in the year 2000.

- The proportion of gainfully employed persons with the middle educational level V shall increase from 22 % in 1982 to 30 % in the year 2000.

- The proportion of the labour force with an educational level corresponding to levels IV and above shall rise from 22 % in 1982 to 38 % in the year 2000.

According to I.N.S.E.E. calculations (1986), the overall labour supply shall continue to expand up to the year 2000. The labour force is expected to grow from 24.2 million in 1985 to 26.4 million in the year 2000, the proportion of women thereby advancing from 41.6 % (1985) to 45.0 %.

The BIPE expects new annual manpower requirements up to the year 2000 to be approx. one third below the expected

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1) The BIPE's calculations are not scientifically uncontroversial (e.g. GERME/VERDIER, 1985). The trends expressed by the figures are nevertheless considered probable. For the definition of educational levels, cf. 2.2.

new labour supply.

In calculating new manpower requirements, the BIPE departs from the following assumptions:

- Although there shall be a sharp decline in the number of jobs with no specific qualification requirements, such jobs shall nevertheless not completely disappear from the production scene. An increase in these jobs is even to be expected in the services sector.

- There shall be a marked increase in the number of jobs requiring a "baccalauréat" or higher education.

The BIPE believes that if the present qualification level structure of those leaving education were to remain unchanged in the coming years, the new labour supply would show a large surplus over manpower requirements at levels VI and V a (no vocational qualification), and in particular at level V (CAP/BEP). Labour supply and manpower demand would be more or less even at the middle educational levels,IV and III ("baccalauréat"/short higher education). In contrast, at the highest levels, II and I (long higher education), the demand could not adequately be covered by the supply of those leaving the universities.

If the BIPE's forecasts are correct, the result with respect to the global imbalance between labour supply and manpower requirements would be that despite the underlying optimistic assumptions of economic growth and

employment trends, the problem of high youth unemployment would persist in the foreseeable future (HCEE/BIPE, p.6). The offshoot of the emergent "over production" of those leaving at level V would be particularly manifested by: sharper "knock out" labour-market competition between those with and those without a CAP or BEP certificate, an increasingly selective practice of recruitment on the part of the industry, an extension of the job-seeking phase following training, an increase in undervalued employment and increasing unemployment among the labour force with the lowest levels of qualifications (JALLADE 1987, p. 124).

3. The educational policy debate on the reform of the vocational training system

The trends emerging in the French education and employment system point to a substantial need for action, not only in the field of educational policy, but above all in the field of labour market policy. The present educational policy debate is therefore not so much dominated by social issues, e.g. equality of opportunity in the education system, as by problems relevant to labour market and economic policy.

In general, the subject of education and training has become a key issue of French domestic politics in recent years. This is a phenomenon which is to be seen above all against the background of the manifestations of economic crisis since the mid-1970's and the future challenges facing French industry in the wake of technological change and the plans for the Single European Market.

In this context, the structure and functional deficiencies of the educational system are on the one hand held partly to blame for the high level of the youth unemployment and the adaptation problems of French industry on the world market. On the other hand, education and training are accorded an important role in an economic policy geared towards crisis management (TANGUY, 1987, p. 57).

With different emphasis, two central problem areas have above all been raised by the educational policy statements

of the various groups of French society and in recently presented scientific experts' studies on the situation of vocational training in France:

- a lack of quantitative concordance between the qualification structure of the new labour supply which is the product of the education/training system, on the one hand, and the actual manpower requirements of French industry, on the other;

- an inadequate qualitative concordance between the contents imparted by the vocational training system, on the one hand, and the changed vocational training requirements of the companies as a result of the introduction of new technologies and new forms of work organisation, on the other.

The reasons for these coordination problems between the vocational education and the employment systems are above all to be found in the internal structural problems of the education system itself and in the insufficient links between school-based vocational education and the working world.

3.1. Internal structural problems of the education system

The French education system is characterised by a distinct imbalance between general education, on the one hand, and vocational training, on the other,not only in terms of their social status, but also with respect to their

material and personnel facilities.

The professors of the Collège de France make the following statement in their "Proposals for education in the future": "One of the most flagrant evils of the present education system is that it tends to know and recognise only one path of intellectual distinction, namely that running through the (mathematical) stream of the "lycée" to a "grande école"...." (quoted from C.E.S., 1985, pp. 4f). In the authors' opinion, any establishment of a hierarchy between "theory" and "practice" in the education system must be countered.

According to an OECD report on the "employment situation of young people in France", the vocational education system is in particular characterised by .... "a lack of prestige, a lack of financial resources, a lack of qualified teachers with vocational experience of their own...." (OECD, 1984, p. 12).

The hierarchies between the various educational paths which are to be found in any country are particularly marked in France as a result of a high degree of selectivity of the school-based educational paths, their institutional compartmentalisation and the fact that hitherto only "lycée" education opened up further educational and training opportunities (JALLADE, 1987, p. 117).

The decision in favour of vocational education is therefore

generally taken following failure along the "royal path" of the general education system; it is to a certain degree a negative orientation. Vocational education at level V - which should actually lead via a CAP or a BEP certificate to a job as a skilled blue- or white-collar worker - is therefore increasingly at the risk of degenerating into a catch-all option for pupils failing to meet the intellectual and abstract demands of the general education system, above all mathematics.

A welter of social conditions and traditions stand in the way of the objective of according vocational education paths the same social recognition as general education routes. Educational hierarchies are at the same time social and cultural hierarchies. And within the school system, particularly in times of intensifying competition, the individual branches tend to keep their distance from each other in the corporatistic mould (JALLADE 1987, pp. 117 ff).

3.2. Insufficient institutional links between the school and the world of work

In the light of the momentum gained by the process of economic and technological change, the divide between the state-funded, centrally controlled school-based vocational education system and the world of work is creating an increasing number of problems. Apart from improving their pupils' level of general education and imparting theoretical vocational knowledge, the vocational secondary schools also have the task of imparting the practical occupation-

related know-how and skills required by industry and promoting skills such as work ethics and social skills. However they are increasingly unable to do so. A number of authors are of the opinion that the swift change in the needs for vocational training and occupational structures is overtaxing the school system. The institutional framework conditions, investments in technical training facilities, the specially trained teaching professionals and bureaucratic/corporatistic inertia combine to pose an obstacle to a flexible adaption of school-based vocational education to changed needs: "Vocational education organised within the school cannot develop as quickly as the world of work" (PROST, 1985 a, p. 165).

PROST accordingly calls for an admission than 100 % school-based vocational education does not in fact prepare the learner for a specific activity, but can merely impart a more or less specifically targeted general form of basic training. PROST moreover has doubts as to whether behavioural skills, e.g. innovative capacity, can be acquired within the framework of traditional full-time school education (loc cit., pp. 165 f).

However, if the relations between the vocational secondary schools and the world of work are to be changed, permitting greater involvement of the firms in vocational education, the firms themselves will also have to adopt a new line of thinking. Industry can no longer expect the state vocational education system to provide them with "finished products"; the companies must assume a certain degree of responsibility

themselves and must therefore be prepared to make a greater financial contribution to the training of the up-and-coming generation. Finally, the state should be prepared to grant employers and unions a more substantial say in the codetermination of the structures and contents of training courses leading to the various occupations (JALLADE, 1987, p.135).

D'IRIBARNE (1982, pp. 44 f.) describes the problem as follows: "France is struggling with the interface between the school and the enterprises. It cannot cope with this problem, as is shown by the high rate of youth unemployment. This unemployment is in fact merely a symptom of a deeper problem which, for purposes of simplicity, we shall describe in three dimensions: the school - which remains aloof from the world of industry and cannot fulfill its vocational training role because it only receives the lower achievers for purposes of vocational training - the companies which are closed to the school and the product of the school and do not believe in the value of the vocational training it imparts - and a general failure to understand vocational training as an investment - which finds its expression in the provision of unstable employment conditions, deceptive vocational training courses and a job-supply of low working content...".

Scientific experts' reports, publications and announcements emanating from state institutions, employers' associations and trade unions all agree that the vocational education system in its present structure, essentially developed in

times of economic prosperity, must be adapted to the present conditions which have altered in the wake of the economic and labour market crisis and technical and market structure change. There is moreover a broad consensus on the general direction a reform of vocational education in France (below the level of higher education) should take; this is evident from the various statements and recommendations on the subject and from the statements made by the representatives from the world of science, state bodies, industry and the unions interviewed by the author. However opinions often differ as to the concrete form the necessary reforms should take.

4. Proposals and state measures in the context of the reform of the vocational education system

The demands presented in the framework of the reform debate of recent years and present efforts towards reform have focused on the following main fields:

- improvement in the levels of general and vocational education (4.1);
- restructuring of vocational education certificates and transitions within the education system (4.2);
- closer links between the vocational secondary schools and industry (4.3);
- an upgrade of industrial apprenticeship (4.4);
- promotion of the integration of young people into working life (4.5);
- new forms of state intervention within the education system (4.6).

4.1. Improvement in the levels of general and vocational education

Given the expected general increase in qualification requirements and in the light of the difficulty in predicting the change in vocational activities, most

recommendations on the reform of the vocational training system are, among others, oriented towards an overall improvement in general and vocational education standards. In the opinion of the "High Commission for Education and the Economy", a certain degree of over-qualification of French youngsters above and beyond the present requirements of industry will have to be taken into account (HCEE, 1987, p. 6). The Economic and Social Council ("Conseil économique et sociale") is also of the opinion that a general improvement in qualifications is necessary. Above all, however, it believes that vocational education itself must be reformed if youngsters are to be able to adapt to future developments in the working world. An effective development of vocational training, it advocates, requires changes in the overall education system. Apart from an increase in students and school leavers at "baccalauréat" level, the "Conseil" maintains, differentiated approaches would have to be developed to solve the problems of those youngsters who do not even hold a formal qualification at CAP/BEP level (C.E.S., 1985, p. 4).

The proposals and measures aimed at an improvement in educational standards are focused on a further reduction of the number of youngsters leaving the education system without any formal qualifications (4.1.1), on the one hand, and a drastic increase in the number of "baccalauréat" holders (4.1.2), on the other. A long-term objective is to bring all pupils - as far as possible - up to the final class of the "collège" (secondary level I), and moreover to ensure that all pupils who do not go on to secondary

level II ("lycée") undergo some form of vocational education.

4.1.1. Reduction in the number of school drop-outs

In 1987 more than every seventh school leaver in France did not even attain a CAP certificate, whereby the overwhelming majority of these pupils originated from socially disadvantaged groups (foreigners, migrant workers, etc.)

PROST(1985 b) regards the high degree of selectivity and hierarchy within the French education system - based, in turn, on a distinct need within society for social differentiation - as the main reason for this high drop-out rate. A further reason is the insufficient standard of vocational education in the vocational secondary schools and in the framework of apprenticeships. In 1985 the pass rate in CAP examinations was only 44.5 % among apprentices and 56.3 % among vocational secondary school pupils (COMBES, 1987, p. 18).

School drop-outs without a vocational education certificate find themselves rejected on two scores: they are regarded as unsuitable, not only for further schooling, but also for successful integration into the world of work.

Pupils dropping out of vocational education are one of the most important and difficult problems education policy has to face. Apart from various pedagogical measures (target group-oriented teaching methods, further training for

teachers, work experience), adapted curricula for low attainers and improved opportunities for correction of under-achievement at school are the main proposals which have been put forward to reduce the number of drop-outs without a formal qualification (PROST, 1985 b, HCEE, 1987, p. 28). In the opinion of the "High Commission for Education and the Economy", social equality of opportunity cannot be achieved by the undifferentiated "collège", much propagated in the past, i.e. the attempt to bring all pupils through general education up to the final class of secondary level I or the school-leaving age (16). As an alternative, it proposes a differentiation of the last two final classes of secondary level I in accordance with the appropriate range of achievement and motivation:

1. the general education route for the large majority of pupils;

2. the establishment of a occupation-related path - "4ème et 3ème technologique - at the "collège" or a vocational secondary school;

3. The introduction of vocational preparation years for low attainers, the so-called "Classes de formations pré-professionnelles", at a vocational secondary school or an apprentice training centre (CFA), generally to be followed by two years of vocational education leading to the CAP or BEP.

The High Commission considers that the pupils of an

age-class should be distributed among these three educational paths according to the ratio 75:15:10 by the year 2000. The new occupation-related and vocational preparation paths would replace the previous "Classe pré-professionnelle de niveau" (C.P.P.N.) and "Classe préparatoire à l'apprentissage" (C.P.A.).

4.1.2. Increase in the number of "baccalauréat" holders

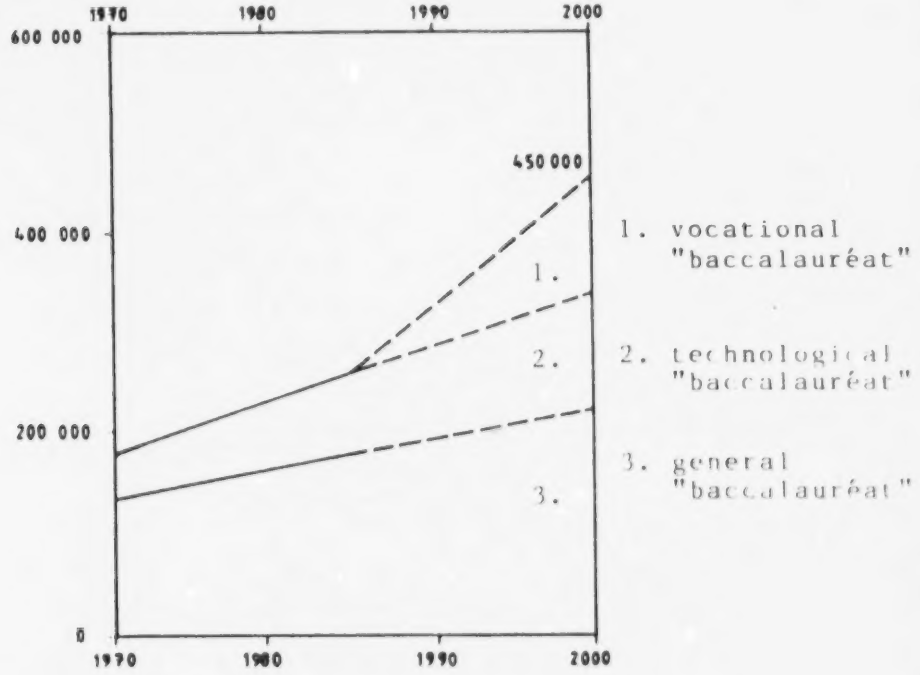
A constant increase can be observed in the proportion of "baccalauréat" holders. In 1966, 12.3 % of an age-class attained the "baccalauréat"; by 1975 this proportion had increased to 24.2 % and in 1985 it stood at 29.4 %. Of the 253 000 "baccalauréat" holders in 1985, every third had taken a technological "baccalauréat" (BTn).

In recent years every French government, regardless of its political ilk, has set the declared aim of bringing approx. 80 % of an age-class to "baccalauréat" level by the year 2000. This target is substantiated by an increasing demand on the part of French industry for skilled and flexible manpower, already manifest, it is maintained, in the fact that the firms are increasingly recruiting personnel at educational level IV and above - persons who hold at least the "baccalauréat".

In its proposals, the "High Commission on Education and the Economy" (HCEE, 1987 c, p. 40) departs from the assumption of a proportion of 75 % "baccalauréat" holders by the year 2000. The recently introduced "baccalauréat

professionnel", a direct vocational qualification, has an important role to play in the aim of increasing the number of "baccalauréat" holders. (cf. also 4.2.2). This "vocational baccalauréat" is to directly prepare students for a highly qualified position as a skilled white- or blue-collar worker. In the opinion of the Commission, almost one quarter of all "baccalauréat" holders should take the vocational "baccalauréat" by the year 2000. (Fig. 2). Almost the same proportion of students should sit the "baccalauréat technologique".

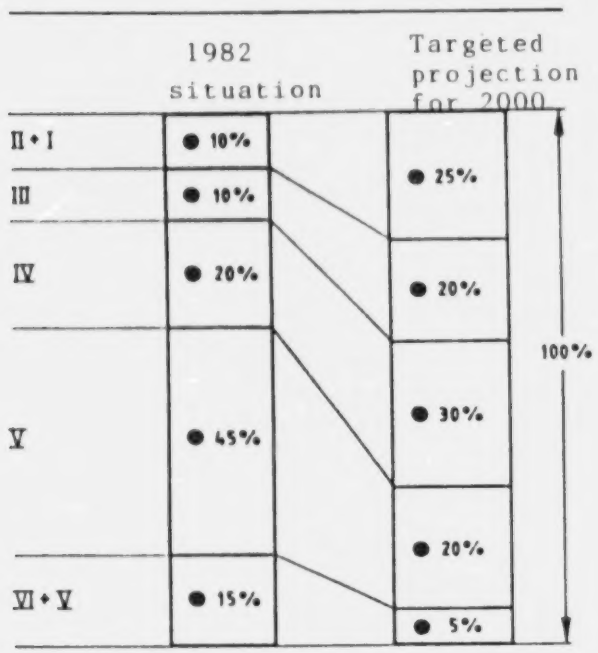
Fig. 2 Projection of "baccalauréat" holders up to the year 2000.



Source: HCEE 1987 c.

By the turn of the century, the proportion of university graduates should also rise to reach 45 % of an age-class, whereby almost every other student should only complete two-year short higher education (level III). (Fig. 3).

Fig. 3 The educational levels of those leaving the education system in 1982 and 2000[1)]



Source: HCEE, 1987 c

1) cf. 2.2 for the definition of educational levels.

The critics of the government's plans to usher in a massive quantitative expansion of upper secondary and higher education do not as a rule tend to question the need for an overall improvement in general and vocational education standards. However doubts are frequently shed on the feasibility of achieving the projected growth rates in the numbers of "baccalauréat" holders and students. Arguments put forward in this context are, among others, that the estimated proportion of pupils capable of taking the "baccalauréat" or entering higher education and motivated to do so is too high and that the school and universities shall not be able to expand the required qualitative and quantitative capacities in the short time between now and the year 2000. It is pointed out that vocational "baccalauréat" courses were only introduced in the mid-1980's and that a rapid upsurge in the number of pupils following this "baccalaureát" stream is improbable, if only in view of the frequently insufficient quality of the courses leading to the BEP certificate and in the light of the staffing and financial problems of many "lycées professionnels" (cf. 4.2.2) (e.g. PASCAUD/SIMONI, 1987, pp. 86 ff.).

It is also pointed out that the supply of skilled jobs might not increase to the expected degree to be able to offer corresponding jobs to the growing numbers of highly skilled young persons - which could demotivate the "baccalauréat" holders (RIBOUD, 1987, p. 134).

Above all the unions emphasise that level V certificates,

i. e. CAP and BEP, shall probably remain the quantitatively most significant qualification for skilled worker recruitment so that considerable efforts shall remain necessary to secure and improve the quality of these vocational education paths (COMBES, 1987, pp. 56 f.).

4.2. Restructuring of vocational education certificates and transitions within the education system

The change in industry's needs for vocational training in the direction of higher general and vocational qualifications and the growing transitional problems of youngsters with a CAP or BEP certificate are the essential factors which triggered off the reform efforts of the Ministry of Education in school-based vocational education at secondary level II.

The reforms are designed to counteract the increasing risk of only under-achievers being taught by the vocational secondary schools and the vocational training certificates acquired at these establishments corresponding less and less to the needs of industry. Apart from restructuring the traditional vocational education tracks leading to the CAP and BEP, the general conviction is that school-based vocational training must be developed into a fully-fledged educational path, equal in rank to the other secondary level II routes and, moreover, that transition opportunities between the various educational paths must be improved. School-based vocational education for the skilled worker level is thereby to be released from its

stigmatisation and isolation from the further general and vocational education paths and made more attractive to more able students. The introduction of the vocational "baccalauréat" is seen as a key starting point in this context.

4.2.1. CAP/BEP certificate

One of the focal points in the Ministry of Education's planning is to reduce the number of vocational education certificates, especially the CAP diplomas, and to re-group them around a similarly reduced number of BEP diplomas. Thus, compared to 315 CAP and 68 BEP certificates in 1983, there were only 286 CAP and 61 BEP certificates in May 1987. These reorganisational measures comprised not only the abolition or amalgamation of a series of traditional certificates, but also the introduction of a number of new certificates in future-oriented fields of activity, e.g. the "automated machine engineer" CAP.

In a number of cases, the CAP certificate has also been transformed into a so-called "mention complémentaire". This is a specialised certificate which can be acquired following an initial vocational training diploma in the framework of a one-year course at a vocational secondary school or an industrial apprenticeship; one example is the former CAP certificate "Dessinateur en construction mécanique". There were 21 of these specialised certificates in 1987.

The medium-term objective is to define approx. 25 occupational fields, to each of which a revised BEP certificate is to be allocated. At the same time, the BEP course, which hitherto had a very theoretical bias, is to be more closely oriented towards practice at the work-place. The number of CAP certificates is to be reduced to approx. 260 and classified according to the newly defined occupational fields. CAP certificates are to become specialisation options of the corresponding BEP certificate, whereby youngsters are as far as possible to prepare for both certificates in parallel.

The planned concentration of vocational education courses and the link between broadly-based BEP and specialised CAP training are designed to make vocational education more versatile, without at the same time neglecting the demand for vocational specialisation.

Resistance to the Ministry of Education's plans to substantially reduce the number of hitherto narrowly specialised CAP certificates has above all come from small-scale professional and business associations which want to retain keep "their" diploma. Teachers' trade unions, fearing substantial technical and regional shifts in teaching staff requirements, have also poured a certain amount of cold water on these plans.

4.2.2. Vocational "baccalauréat"

A second focal point of the Ministry of Education's

planning is the introduction of the vocational "baccalauréat" in the academic year 1985/86. This "baccalauréat professionnel" is intended as a response to the presumably increasing demand from industry for highly qualified personnel. This "baccalauréat", classified under level IV, is generally intended to prepare young people for direct transition to working life, although commencement of (short) higher education is not excluded.

Employers, above all in the metal-working industry and large-scale enterprises, assume that the traditional courses for skilled workers at level V (CAP, BEP) shall increasingly fail to correspond to the rising demands for vocational competence and flexibility and are strongly in favour or the introduction of a vocational "baccalauréat". In contrast, above all those branches of the economy dominated by small and medium-sized firms advocate that the traditional level V vocational education certificates should be maintained in the future. The same can be said for the trade unions which are at the same time pressing for a reform of the CAP and BEP to include modern and versatile training contents. In the opinion of the unions, one-sided preference of the new vocational education track leading to the vocational "baccalauréat" on the basis of the argument put forward in particular by large-scale companies, i.e. that there is no future for vocational education at level V, would be to the detriment of above all low attainers.

A little more than 14 000 pupils prepared for the then

14 specialised fields of the vocational "baccalauréat"in the academic year 1987/88. Further expansion of the vocational "baccalauréat", according to officials from the Ministry of Education interviewed by the author, is to be applied with extreme caution, both with regard to the creation by the Ministry of new specialisations and decisions by the local education authorities on the opening of new vocational education paths leading to the vocational "baccalauréat".

There is consequently still considerable uncertainty as to what further vocational "baccalauréat" specialisations are to be introduced. In this context a number of persons the author spoke to voiced the fear - similarly to the introduction of the BEP - of the introduction of an excessive number of specialisations on account of pressure from the various professional and business associations; this would deprive the vocational "baccalauréat" of its special character as a broadly-based, versatile vocational education path.

The new vocational education track is only to be introduced at a vocational secondary school if the quality of the course can be assured, offering leavers good prospects on the local job market. In particular in streams for industrial occupations, the frequently inadequate qualifications of the teaching staff at present pose one of the major obstacles to the establishment of the new educational route.

4.2.3. The hierarchy among vocational education certificates

The endeavours to reclassify CAP certificates according to occupational fields, to each of which a BEP is allocated, and the introduction of a vocational "baccalauréat", permitting BEP holders to continue their vocational education, creates a new hierarchy among the vocational education certificates at secondary level II. The Ministry of Education plans to link one or two BEP specialisations to one of the voctional "baccalauréat" specialisations. The BEP would therefore become a kind of elementary stage of vocational education for highly skilled blue and white-collar workers which would then comprise four years, concluding with the vocational "baccalauréat".

One example is the "bureautique" vocational "baccalauréat", to which the two BEP certificates "agent de secrétariat, sténodactylographie" and "communication, administration, secrétariat" are allocated. A further example is the "équipement et installations électriques" vocational "baccalauréat" with the "électrotechnique" BEP, which in turn comprises the options "électricien d'équipement" and électromécanicien".

Despite the expected rise in qualification requirements, the CAP and BEP are not to be upgraded, but merely updated "at the same level".

One example is the CAP certificate "entretien de systèmes

mécaniques" (mechanical (office) equipment maintenance) which was expanded in 1986 to include simple repair and replacement operations of electronic components, whereas the "maintenance de systèmes mécaniques automatisés" vocational "baccalauréat" was created for more complex maintenance work on modern machines.

The future role of the CAP is often viewed as a means of providing low achievers - who would otherwise leave the educational system without any qualification - with an opportunity of gaining a vocational qualification.

According to one of the persons I interviewed, this hierarchy among vocational education certificates - which continues in the educational paths following secondary level II - reflects the marked status-oriented way of thinking in France and the existence of a more pronounced hierarchy in work organisation in industry and the administration than in the Federal Republic of Germany.

Similarly to the introduction of the BEP in 1967, with the newly devised vocational "baccalauréat", the French Ministry of Education has again reacted to the higher demands of the employment system by introducing a new, "higher grade" level of diploma and not, as is customary practice in the Federal Republic of Germany, by revising the contents of existing certificates.

The BEP was created in the 1960's as a more theoretical and broadly-based certificate than the traditional CAP,

intended to give young people a better preparation for the increased demands of modern industry in terms of abstractive capacity and flexibility (CHARLOT/FIGEAT, 1985, p. 417). This led to a depreciation of the traditional CAP certificate in many occupational fields. As already mentioned, a similar process is feared in connection with the introduction of the vocational "baccalauréat" since the imparting of qualifications for the "highly qualified skilled worker or employee of the future", such as expertise, knowledge of new technologies, independence, planning skills, abstractive capacity and cooperative and communicative skills, are primarily regarded as the task of the educational paths leading to the vocational "baccalauréat".

4.2.4. Improvement of transitions within the education system

It is characteristic of the French education system that a choice in favour of a given educational path, once taken - or imposed as a result of temporary under-achievement - determines the subsequent course of education - and thereby also future career prospects - to a much greater extent than e.g. in the education system in the Federal Republic of Germany[1]. Thus in the past youngsters channelled

1) A first differentiation of pupils according to achievement is nevertheless not applied until at the earliest seven years and in the vast majority of cases only nine years after the commencement of general education. In the Federal Republic of Germany this generally occurs after only four years. However German youngsters on average remain longer than their French counterparts in the general education system (Hauptschule, Realschule, Gymnasium or Gesamtschule) before commencing vocational education.

into vocational education streams leading to a CAP or BEP as a result of learning difficulties at secondary level I later had virtually no opportunity of picking up their vocational education at a higher level.

To improve opportunities of catching up on higher-level diplomas or correcting earlier educational choices which veered off the "royal path" leading to the general academic "baccalauréat" and to increase the appeal of vocational education for school achievers, it was necessary to improve the possibilities of transition from the vocational streams leading to the CAP or BEP to educational paths leading to the higher-level certificates.

The most important reforms in this context are as follows:

- The restructuring of the CAP and BEP diplomas described under 4.2.1. Hitherto pupils aiming at the CAP switched to the vocational secondary school after the "cinquième", i.e. at the age of approx. 14/15 and those with the BEP in mind transferred after the "troisième", i.e. at the age of approx. 16. BEP pupils could either prepare for a CAP diploma in parallel to or following their BEP studies. Hitherto this had not been possible vice versa for CAP pupils. With the reclassification of the CAP and BEP in conjunction with the restructuring of secondary level I, described under 4.1.1., CAP holders can in future also acquire the BEP.

- The introduction of the vocational "baccalauréat",

setting up a sequence of vocational educational tracks in the vocational streams of the education system, permitting youngsters to attain a qualification at levels IV ("baccalauréat professionnel") or III (BTS).

- Reinforced introduction of so-called "classes passerelles ("bridging courses") offering BEP holders the opportunity of switching to the educational paths leading to the technological (BTn) or general "baccalauréat".

These improved opportunities of transition between formerly compartmentalised educational paths have probably served to reduce the traditional stigmatisation of vocational education at secondary level II. However a parity between general academic and vocational education in the eyes of the public cannot be expected to develop in the short term (JALLADE, 1987, p. 117).

4.3. Closer links between the vocational secondary schools and industry

One of the most important objectives of the Ministry of Education's reforms in years has been to bring the vocational secondary schools ("lycées professionnels"), responsible for the vocational education a large proportion of up-and-coming personnel,out of their isolation from the world of work, in general, and the firms of their region, in particular. The most important measures in this context include the establishment of systematic work experience programmes,

the introduction of school/industry sandwich courses leading to the vocational "baccalauréat", complementary vocational training schemes following the BEP or CAP examination and, finally, the promotion of partnerships between school and industry for various training purposes.

The process of forging closer links between school and industry touches upon much more than mere vocational education. It also represents the attempt to bring together two hitherto largely separate "worlds" with their own specific value systems and thought patterns - for, as before, the dominant opinion in France is that a company is only a place for work and that the school has a monopoly as far as education is concerned.

The opening of the vocational secondary school to industry is to be considered in the context of general aspirations to strengthen the integration of the firms and public administrations into the training of their up-and-coming personnel. These aspirations include the measures designed to upgrade industrial apprenticeship, discussed in more detail below (4.4) and state integration programmes for youngsters out of a job (4.5). All these measures have one aim in common: to improve the concordance between the skills imparted in the framework of vocational education, on the one hand, and the actual vocational training needs of industry, on the other, by introducing sandwich courses, thus contributing to a solution of the current severe problems of young people in the transition from vocational education to steady employment.

4.3.1. Work experience

These so-called "séquences éducatives en entreprise" were established by a decree of 16 July 1979. Although work experience programmes had previously been envisaged for a number of CAP or BEP courses, they mainly consisted of merely the establishment of brief contact without any clear-cut learning aims. The decree in contrast ideally aims at a coordinated sequence of in-school educational phases and practical on-the-job phases in industry/ administration.

Work experience for vocational secondary school pupils has indeed spread rapidly. In the academic year 1982/83, such work experience schemes were already organised by 73 % of all vocational secondary schools. However far from all pupils participated in these schemes and for 1987 the proportion of pupils having completed an in-firm "stage" is estimated at merely 30 %.

Work experience is meanwhile positively assessed by the majority of heads, teachers and pupils and by a large number of firms. At the same time some schools are still reticent to introduce or quantitatively expand such schemes. Apart from the persistent scepticism of some teachers as regards the educational value and quality of work experience, the main reason indicated for this reticence is that the firms are coming up against the limits of their receptive capacity for trainees. The fact that educational routes other than those leading to the

CAP or BEP (e.g. university courses) are increasingly envisaging work experience in industry has a role to play in this context.

Bottlenecks in the provision of trainee places are above all to be found in the manufacturing industry, but are not so severe in the services sector in which trainees can be productively set to work more quickly. The Economic and Social Council advocates that the firms offering training facilities serving a general interest should be granted financial support (C.E.S., 1987, p. 121).

The positive quantitative development of work experience is faced with the problem of securing the minimum technical and educational quality of measures at this level. According to the results of an evaluation study (PASCAUD/SIMONIN, 1979), the objective of the 1979 decree of making work experience part and parcel of school-based vocational education has not yet become reality. Pupils on average spend no longer than two weeks in a firm. The required degree of coordination of the planning and assessment of work experience between teachers and industrial tutors is often lacking. Moreover, school heads and teachers do not so much expect their pupils to acquire technical know-how and skills in the framework of work experience as better motivation for the preparation of their examinations and a positive influence on their behaviour and attitudes, e.g. improved work discipline and a greater sense of responsibility.

Although work experience for vocational secondary school pupils is as a whole to be assessed as a positive contribution to the aim of bringing the school and industry closer together, it is evident that the quantitative and qualitative development of these measures will remain limited in the future: the willingness of industry to take on trainees will only increase if it can expect certain advantages from these measures. Furthermore, without more intensive pedagogical cooperation between teachers and industrial tutors, there is a risk of the firms' role being reduced to that of imparting merely traditional work ethics without an intertwinement of consciously targeted behavioural aims and technical training objectives.

4.3.2. Sandwich courses leading to the vocational "baccalauréat"

The vocational education track leading to the vocational "baccalauréat" marks the introduction for the first time in French history of in-firm/in-school sandwich courses as a binding principle of vocational education organisation. During their two-year course, pupils complete between 12 and 24 of the total number of 69 weeks of learning time in one or more firms or administrations. The training companies must commit themselves to the learning targets of the in-firm phases which are laid down in the curriculum.

The decree on the "industries chimiques et de procédés" vocational "baccalauréat", e.g. envisages the following

training sequences in the company: in the first year a minimum of ten weeks, divided into two phases of five weeks, and in the second year at least six consecutive weeks.

The in-firm training phases are assigned the following functions:

- completion of the theoretical and technological skills acquired at school, in particular concerning the operation of technical equipment which is not at the school's disposal.

- familiarisation with and understanding of corporate organisation and the most important manufacturing process of the chemical industry.

The following learning targets are set for the in-firm training phases:

Year 1:

- knowledge of the corporate organisational chart and departments,

- knowledge of the various workplaces and classification of the levels of responsibility in the production field,

- use of documents on products and equipment,

- development of an awareness of quality requirements and costs,

- acquisition of the behavioural patterns necessary for industrial safety and health,

- participation in the establishment and implementation of manufacturing and control processes.

Year 2:

- participation in the operation of installations and control of the flow of production,

- participation in the diagnosis of functional problems in the field of production and maintenance operations,

- evaluation and revision of production documents,

- participation in departmental meetings and other working groups.

The pedagogical responsibility for the industrial training of a pupil is entrusted to a teacher who coordinates the course of the training with the trainer in the firm. The technical and social skills acquired by a pupil in the course of his industrial training are evaluated and assessed by the competent teacher in collaboration with the industrial trainer.

Since the academic year 1986/87 it has been possible - albeit initially only in the form of pilot projects at selected apprentice training centres (CFA) - to prepare for the vocational "baccalauréat" in the framework of industrial apprenticeship. This innovation is to be seen in conjunction with efforts to upgrade industrial apprenticeship as an alternative and independent educational path (cf. 4.4).

4.3.3. Complementary training schemes at local level

These so-called "formations complémentaires d'initiative locale" were set up in 1985. The training schemes, which follow on from a CAP or BEP certificate, are determined at local level by the school authorities (vocational secondary schools, supervisory authorities) and the firms. This instrument is designed to offer a rapid, flexible response to a local demand for vocational training qualifications, even if only on an ad hoc or short-term basis; there is therefore no stipulation of either the contents or the duration of the training; a final examination is not envisaged.

The learning targets may consequently be considerably varied:

- a vocational specialisation for which the CAP and BEP do not provide sufficient preparation;

- an upgrade of the qualification level of certain CAP

or BEP certificates;

- the acquisition of a dual qualification without a second certificate;

- the acquisition of very specific or innovative additional qualifications (PASCAUD/SIMONIN, 1987, pp. 82 ff.).

The main problem for the vocational secondary schools in establishing such training schemes is the provision of correspondingly qualified teachers and the necessary facilities. To avoid high-cost investment, the schools are recommended a form of training organisation permitting the use of industrial facilities.

Although complementary training schemes can be planned directly between a school and one or more firms, the final decision nevertheless remains in the hands of the competent school authority ("rectorat"), which, as can be observed, frequently turns down initiatives requiring additional funding. To ensure that these complementary training schemes remain the originally intended flexible adaptation instrument between school-based training and local vocational training requirements, the repetition of a given scheme also requires the express approval of the school authority.

4.3.4. School/industry partnerships

The "jumelages école-entreprises" action programme was

launched in 1984. Its objective is to intensify relations between the school and its economic environment at local level to the mutual benefit of both sides.

The contents of the partnership agreements are largely left to the initiative of the head of the respective educational establishment. Agreements may range from the exchange of information or services to joint projects with a discernible relevance to training. Examples of agreements concluded are: exchange of teachers and company personnel, whereby the former were given a work experience placement and the latter gave classes in the school; work experience for pupils at expensive production plants which the school does not have at its disposal and, in return, the continuing training of company employees in the school; transfer of technological know-how from the school to small-scale companies, which offered work experience placements or even jobs in return.

According to the results of the PASCAUD/SIMONIN study (1987), the action programme is positively assessed by the majority of surveyed heads of establishment. However in some cases these agreements merely serve to formalise cooperation links between schools and industry which existed previously. Among the advantages particularly emphasised were: the possibility of better orientation of vocational education towards practical requirements, the fact that it is easier to find trainee placements for pupils and teachers, the possibility of offering pupils better access to jobs upon completion of their vocational

education and improvement of vocational education in the field of new technologies.

4.4. Upgrading of industrial apprenticeship

In France initial training in the form of industrial apprenticeship ("apprentissage") has not by far the significance it has in the Federal Republic of Germany; this applies both to quantity and its reputation as an educational path. Notwithstanding, somewhat more than 100 000 new apprenticeship contracts have been concluded in recent years[1]. However the overwhelming majority of these were in small-scale firms in the traditional crafts and trades sectors, e.g. construction, car mechanics, foodstuffs and the retail trade. Approx. three out of every four apprentices serve in firms with fewer than ten employees. Yet only 12 % of firms in the crafts and trades sector train apprentices (COMBES, 1987, p. 32). Apprenticeship is on the bottom rung of the status ladder of vocational education paths and has so far largely been a "safety net" for under-achievers.

In particular the Chirac government made considerable legislative and financial efforts with the aim of develop-

1) There was a sharp increase in the number of young people serving an apprenticeship between academic years 1974/75 and 1981/82: 85 000 - 228 000; this figure fell to 213 000 in 1985/86 and rose again to 232 000 in 1986/87 (MADELAIN, 1987).

ing industrial apprenticeship into an independent vocational education path, offering the same educational prospects as school-based educational tracks and of greater appeal to large-scale companies. The Law on the reform of apprenticeship training of 23 July 1987 (revision of the "code de travail") must be given particular emphasis in this context. The law provides, among others, for the following:

- Certificates of a higher level than the CAP (vocational "baccalauréat", BTS) can in future be prepared in the framework of an apprenticeship.

- The duration of an apprenticeship may therefore fluctuate between one and three years and several successive apprenticeships may be served.

The following summarises the most important provision on the legal status of apprentices and the organisation, funding and monitoring of apprentice training in the revised "code du travail":

- The training contract is a special type of employment contract in which the employer commits himself not only to provide the young employee with a remuneration[1] but also methodical and complete vocational training ,

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1) This remuneration varies according to age and training semester between 15 % and 60 % of the statutory minimum wage (SMIC) which stood at 4 400 francs (gross) on 1 July 1985.

implemented partly in the firm and partly in an apprentice training centre (CFA) (Art. L 117-1).

- A CFA may reach an agreement with a training company according to which the firm - subject to proof of its suitability - may assume part of the theoretical and practical training which would normally be the task of the centre. A CFA may also transfer part or all of its teaching mandate to a state or private school, generally a vocational secondary school, but nevertheless retains its administrative and pedagogical responsibility (Art. L 116-1-1).

- The establishment of a CFA takes place in the form of an agreement between the region - generally responsible for apprentice training since the law on decentralisation of 1983 - and a private or public sponsor, e.g. the Chambers[1], business or professional associations, firms, corporate groups or central, regional or local authorities (Art. L 116-2).

- The duration of training at a CFA consists of a minimum of 400 hours per annum; this roughly corresponds to one quarter of total training time (Art. L 116-3).

- Pedagogical monitoring of a CFA and industrial training is implemented by the apprentice training inspectors,

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1) This term is used to denote the Chambers of industry and commerce, manual crafts and agriculture.

responsible to the Ministry of Education. Technical and financial control of the CFA's are (generally) the responsibility of the regions (Art. L 116-4).

- The CFA are partly funded by the state which levies a "taxe d'apprentissage" amounting to 0.5 % of the total corporate payroll. Companies are exempted from this tax if they can furnish proof of corporate expenditure on precisely defined purposes of vocational training. Deductible items include part of wages paid to the company's apprentices and direct payments to a CFA or a sponsoring organisation (e.g.the Chambers) or other public or private full-time school-based vocational training institutions.

  A second source of CFA funding are subsidies from the region which are in turn dependent on the financial support granted to the regions by the state. The state also makes an indirect contribution to the funding of in-firm training by exempting companies from the employers' contribution payable on apprentices' allowances (COMBES, 1987, pp. 42 f.).

Of the total number of 488 CFA's in 1987, 22.8 % were supported by Chambers, 24 % by public bodies and local authorities and 53.2 % by private organisations (associations, firms, etc.). However there are more apprentices in the Chambers' CFA's than in CFA's sponsored by private organisations. (44.6 % : 40.1 %) (MADELAIN, 1987, p. 13).

The average number of teaching hours at the CFA's is variable and particularly depends on the relevant occupational group; in some cases it lies substantially above the statutory minimum, raised from 360 to 400 hours by the 1987 revision of the law. In the academic year 1985/86, the average number of teaching hours at the CFA's stood at 420. This corresponds roughly to one third of the teaching hours in comparable full-time school-based courses. CFA teaching hours are distributed as follows: general education: 33 %, practical vocational education: 33 %, theoretical vocational education: 30 % and physical education: 4 %. (MINISTERE DE L'EDUCATION NATIONALE, 1987, pp. 184 f.).

The 1987 amendment of the law is to be seen in conjunction with the 1971 reform of apprenticeship training (cf. 1.2). The intended upgrade of apprenticeship did not fully meet the legislator's expectations. Apprenticeship remained largely restricted to small-scale firms in the crafts and trades and commerce and only the lowest achievers opted for this path. The Chirac government therefore intended the 1987 reform to remove any potential obstacles to a mobilisation in favour of apprentice training, in particular among large-scale enterprises. In the opinion of the employers' associations, the main step in this direction was the amendment in the new law lifting the restriction of apprenticeship education to merely the CAF certificate. In addition, exemption from the employers' contribution to apprentices' social insurance was extended to firms with more than ten employees.

A hefty debate erupted both inside and outside Parliament in connection with the legislative procedure leading to the reform of apprentice training. This debate was focused not only on the amendments proposed by the Chirac government, but also on the long-term role of apprentice training in France. The critics of the status quo and the quality of apprentice training have meanwhile accepted the principle of industrial apprenticeship, especially for careers in which on-the-job training is indispensable, and have acknowledged the social function of this form of training as a means of providing low achievers with a vocational qualification and social integration. However many circles have questioned the aim of the Chirac government to develop apprenticeship into an independent vocational education track, alongside full-time school education, offering access to higher-level certificates than the CAP. Above all the teachers' unions should be mentioned in this context: they see this measure as competition for the vocational secondary schools; the CGT, moreover, fears that responsibility for vocational education could be increasingly shifted into the sphere of the entrepreneurs' right of disposal, to the detriment of the youngsters. With the exception of the CPDT, all the trade unions wish to restrict apprenticeship to its present limited scope. The possibility opened up to industry by the new law, whereby the companies, in coordination with a CFA, may assume part of the CFAs' tuition tasks themselves, thus gaining wide-ranging control over apprenticeship training, also sparked off hefty reactions, especially among the trade unions (COMBES 1987, pp. 53 ff.).

Whether or not the intended upgrade of industrial apprentice-

ship training shall prove to be a success, is still difficult to assess at the present moment. Much shall depend on the degree to which large-scale industrial and service companies are prepared to build up and finance apprenticeship training and the extent to which the apprenticeship training centres (CFA), responsible for school-based part of apprenticeship, can guarantee the necessary training capacity, teacher qualifications and quality standards for more demanding levels of vocational diplomas.

The following are some of the major technical obstacles in the way of a rapid quantitative expansion of apprenticeship and its establishment as an independent branch of vocational education (COMBES 1984, COMBES, 1987):

- the extremely heterogeneous and partly insufficient financial resources of the CFA's which leaves its mark on the quality of training.[1)]

- the different salaries and contractual situation of teachers within a given CFA, and above all among the various CFA's, whereby recruitment and remuneration policy is very much dependent on the financial situation of the training centre.

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1) In 1985 the proportion of funding per apprentice from the "taxe d'apprentissage" ranged from FF 1 073 in the case of the CFA's of the Chambers of trade and FF 41 467 in the training centres sponsored by the firms (COMBES, 1987, p. 45).

- the limited financial resources provided by the state to the regions for the expansion and establishment of CFA's.

- insufficient guarantee of the provision of continuing training for CFA teachers and trainers in the firms.

- the fact that in most cases in-firm and CFA training continue to co-exist in isolation.

- the hitherto low level of preparedness on behalf of larger firms to make the necessary material and personnel investments (e.g. for a training workshop).

- initial experience shows that although the course leading to a vocational "baccalauréat" in the framework of apprenticeship is in principle possible, considerable pedagogical efforts are necessary to develop the necessary "pédagogie de l'alternance".

- and finally the unclarified division of roles between industrial apprenticeship and other forms of alternance training for young people (see 4.5).

All in all it can be said that in the immediate future industrial apprenticeship can only be expected to open up for higher-level vocational education diplomas in larger firms. This however implies the risk of a division in apprentice education - training organised by small firms for the majority of apprentices and an "élite apprentice-

ship" for the privileged few in large companies.

4.5. State measures to promote the integration of young people into working life

Under the pressure of growing youth unemployment and a trend towards an extension of the transition phase from school/university to steady employment, a series of state programmes have been introduced since 1977 with the aim of promoting the vocational integration of youngsters: three national employment pacts in the years 1977-1983, the third interrupted by a "plan for the future of youth" on account of a change in the presidency and government in 1981/82. This was followed in 1986 by a "plan of urgency" with which the Chirac government once again massively reinforced state integration programmes. The programmes or promoted schemes are all based on work and/or training phases in industry, whereby the firms are granted a more or less substantial exemption from the employers' social security contribution; for certain schemes training costs can moreover be offset from vocational training levies (apprentice tax, continuing training levy). The concrete overhauling of the promotion measures which took place in 1987 was largely based by the legislator on a corresponding agreement between the social partners of 26 October 1983.

It is striking to note the frequency with which the packages of measures designed to promote the integration of young people, espeically their financial modalities,

have been repeatedly altered over the years. This has made the whole system designed to promote the transition from school to working life unstable and intransparent for the youngsters and firms concerned. Apart from frequent changes of government since the mid 1970's, this phenomenon can be explained by the need to adapt the programmes to changed target groups (e.g. increase of the age limit from 18 to 25), to improve the linkage between participation in a programme and subsequent recruitment by the company and to reduce the "bandwagon" effect (e.g. exemption from employers' taxes only if the youngster is actually recruited. On the other hand, the fact that state financial support for the integration of young people into working life was until recently viewed as a cyclical problem has presumably also played a role in this context.

The schemes to promote the vocational integration of young people aged 16-25 can firstly be differentiated according to whether or not they are linked to an employment contract. A further differentiation is the proportion or duration of training phases. The following gives an overview of the most important characteristic of the various schemes.

Over 800 000 youngsters participated in such integration schemes in 1986. A total of 9 000 million francs were earmarked for the first phase of the "urgency plan" from May 1986 to January 1987. Schemes primarily aimed at vocational orientation or the securing of a first job are quantitatively much more significant than measures with a more specific bias towards vocational qualification.

Overview: Integration schemes for young people aged 16-25 (as of early 1987)

I. Schemes without an employment contract	Aims	Target group	Duration	Participants 1986
1. Work experience preparing for employment	Completion of basic general and vocational knowledge and development of a realistic training and employment perspective	Young school leavers with no vocational education certificate	550 hours in the educational institution + 2 months in industry	35 000
2. Work experience as an introduction to working life	Discovery of the real world of industry and vocational orientation	long-term jobless youngsters	3-6 months work experience in industry, 75 hours personal orientation assistance by an authorised organisation	191 000
3. Job-creation schemes (TUC)	Acquisition of occupational experience	Jobless youngsters aged 16-21 and youngsters aged 22-26 out of work for at least a year	20 hours per week for 3-12 months	364 000

II.	Schemes linked to an employment contract				
1.	Adaptation contracts	Adaptation of qualifications to occupational practice to facilitate recruitment	Youngsters with partial vocational qualifications or having completed vocational education	a temporary or unlimited working contract with at least 200 hours vocational education	203 000
2.	Qualification contracts	Acquisition of a certified/recognised qualification	Jobless youngsters with no/inadequate qualifications	6-24 months, at least 25 % of the duration of the contract must consist of training by an educational institution	25 000

Sources: MINISTERE DES AFFAIRES SOCIALES ET DE L'EMPLOIS 1987, p. 67 ff.;
PROJET DE LOIS DE FINANCES POUR 1987 - FORMATION PROFESSIONELLE - p. 69 ff.

In particular the "qualification contracts", representing a type of apprenticeship, have hitherto met with relatively little response.

By far the lion's share of the schemes has so far been implemented in small-scale firms with up to 50 employees, whereby the tertiary sector has been dominant. Young women have been slightly underrepresented. Most participants were aged 18-21. Two out of three had a level V diploma (at least CAP or BEP certificate) (MINISTERE DES AFFAIRES SOCIALES ET DE L'EMPLOI, 1987, p. 71).

The state integration programmes' contribution towards easing the strain on the job market is not insubstantial: the number of jobless 16 - 25-year-olds fell by 3.5 % in 1986. However, since the number of unemployed adults climbed 15.4 % in the same period, it is to be assumed that certain substitution effects were caused by the integration schemes for young people (Le Monde, 4 April 1987, C.E.S., 1987, p. 7). Further criticism is that youngsters most severely disadvantaged on the labour market do not draw sufficient advantage from the schemes (CASPAR, 1988) and that an insufficient number of long-term jobs are created for previously unemployed youngsters (AMAT, 1986, p. 55).

A survey conducted early in 1987 among 11 000 previous participants in integration schemes on their situation three months following completion of these schemes shows the following picture:

Table 7: The effectiveness of integration schemes

Type of scheme	Situation 3 months following the end of the scheme				
	permanent employment contract	temporary employment contract	participation in an integration scheme	unemployment	others
adaptation contract	70.9 %	8,0 %	3,2 %	11,7 %	6,2 %
qualification contract	38,1 %	12,4 %	4,8 %	23,9 %	20,8 %
work experience preparing for introduction to working life	8,4 %	10,0 %	35,9 %	34,1 %	11,6 %

Source: MINISTERE DES AFFAIRES SOCIALES ET DE L'EMPLOIS 1987, p. 73

Although the Economic and Social Council gives an overall positive assessment of the integration schemes for young people, it nevertheless clearly stresses that these schemes cannot be a long-term solution to the high rate of youth unemployment in France which, it believes, will essentially depend on future economic developments and a related increase in the job supply. With reference to the continuation of the schemes, the Council recommends that

they should be made more transparent and in particular as far as the "qualification contract" schemes (particularly geared towards the promotion of qualifications) are concerned, exemption from the employers' social security contribution should be granted on a permanent basis as in the case of apprenticeships; this would give employers greater security for purposes of their planning (C.E.S., 1987, p. 7, 122 f.).

A positive offshoot of state integration schemes has been that these programmes have provided many firms with a first opportunity of gaining experience in the training of young people so that opportunities for the implementation of alternance forms of training can be expected to improve.

In the opinion of the Economic and Social Council (C.E.S., 1987, p. 8) and various other authors (e.g. JALLADE, 1987, p. 116), post-school vocational training schemes of the "adaptation and qualification contract" type can no longer be merely regarded as cyclical measures in conjunction with the unfavourable labour market situation. A transition phase following school accompanied by vocational training measures ("transition formatice") is also considered necessary from the structural angle for two principal reasons. Despite the declining proportion of young people without a vocational training certificate, the education system shall continue to churn out a high number of young people with no or very fragmentary qualifications or vocational qualifications ill-

suited to labour market requirements of the future. And the more the school-based vocational education paths are geared towards the promotion of "versatile" qualifications, the less employers will be able to expect directly deployable staff.

At the same time it shall be necessary to clarify the role of post-school alternating forms of training, and thereby in particular the "qualification contract" type schemes, and their position vis-à-vis industrial apprenticeship or school-based alternance forms of vocational education - which can be expected to gain momentum - and to provide for better coordination between these various forms of training.

4.6. The change in state intervention in the vocational training system

France is a country with a distinct tradition of centralisation and state control and this is particularly pronounced in the field of education. Responsibility for the organisation and steering of the vocational education system has largely been and in the mid-1980's still remains in the hands of the state or the government in Paris.

However, with the end of the post-war period of reconstruction and growth in the mid-1970's, an accelerated change in economic and technical structures and growing unemployment, educational policy became confronted with completely distinct problems in the coordination of the

education and employment systems, the solution of which made new forms and levels of state educational planning indispensable. A reorientation of central state educational planning (4.6.1), the decentralisation of responsibilities in the organisation and steering of vocational training (4.6.2) and increased integration of the social partners in the definition of vocational training policy measures (4.6.3) are to be underlined as the most important changes in this context. However these are developments which cannot be considered to concluded, even at the end of the 1980's. A controversial debate has been going on for some time on how far the state should transfer its competences in the field of vocational education to the regions and to what extent the influence of the social partners should be expanded. Although the limits to centralised state intervention in the education system are widely emphasised in the light of already existing disparities in the economic situation and educational infrastructure of the regions, it is also feared that an exaggerated decentralisation of state authority might jeopardise the uniformity of educational opportunities, working and living conditions in France to an even greater degree. It has also been stressed that the state must maintain the possibility of pushing ahead with the further development of the vocational training system in the interests of society if the social partners or the regions are not in a position to do so.

Observers (e.g. BACHELOT, 1987) are of the opinion that the debate on the future role of the state, regions and

social partners in initial training is not always conducted with the nuances appropriate to the complexity and intricacy of the organisational and steering problems involved. It is particularly necessary to differentiate between the problem of the quantitative steering of the flows of pupils into the different educational levels and courses leading to the various occupations, on the one hand, and the problem of the adaptation of training course structures and training contents to changed vocational training requirements, on the other. The former problem mainly concerns the shaping of state educational planning, whereas the latter focuses upon the involvement of the social partners in the decision-making processes of educational policy.

4.6.1. Educational planning

In the French system of primarily state school-based vocational education, it is the state which has the main responsibility for steering the flows of pupils in accordance with manpower requirements. The state is thereby faced with the difficult problem of having to create an educational infrastructure - by building and equiping schools, training teachers and establishing educational paths - which will account not only for the present demand for training, but also for manpower requirements expected in the medium term. Since these decisions concerning investment are of medium- und long-term effect, educational planning must be as forward-looking as possible at both national and regional level.

State economic and educational planning ("planification") developed in the aftermath of World War II, whereby it was primarily on question of targeted deployment of the scarce resources of the national economy - including manpower potential - in the interests of economic reconstruction. In this phase, as in the phase of economic growth reaching into early 1970's, the dearth of qualified manpower was the decisive factor guiding educational planning. As methods using macroeconomic models and quantitative forecasting of manpower requirements per economic sector, region and occupation became increasingly refined, attempts were launched to quantify vocational training requirements.

The end of the period of economic growth and surging unemployment in the 1970's sparked off a crisis in state educational planning in the form it had assumed until then. It was now confronted with fundamentally changed economic and social framework conditions and the theoretical and methodical weaknesses of the previous approach of a quantifying forecast of training requirements (e.g. inadequate consideration of occupational mobility, the momentum of technical change and the influence of qualification supply on manpower demand) and the limits of its practical applicability became increasingly evident. The pressing problem of educational policy was no longer the scarcity of qualified manpower, but swelling unemployment, especially among young people upon leaving school. In the framework of the VIIIth plan for 1982 and the following years, the quantifying approach to

educational planning was abandoned, at least at national level (TANGUY et al., 1986). Quantitative paramenters were replaced by more qualitative and structural estimates and targets, whose objective and empirical substantiation have however been assessed by critics as unsatisfactory.

Despite all the problems in the forward planning of the vocational training needs of industry and society as a whole, state educational planning nevertheless requires indications of the future distribution of the flows of pupils according to qualification levels and occupational groups. Increased attention has therefore recently been drawn to the lack of and need for a consistent forecast of the more global trends in vocational training needs (HCEE, 1987, p. 18, BLONDEL, 1987).

The considerations formulated by the Economic and Social Council (C.E.S., 1987) for "planification" as a whole shall undoubtedly be decisive for state educational planning: medium-term political objectives are to be developed on the basis of prospective analyses and scenarios on the key development trends of the economy and society and intensive consultation of the interest groups concerned. The financial requirements linked to state intervention are to be presented to Parliament in the form of multiannual expenditure programmes ("lois-programmes"). National planning targets are to picked up by regional planning bodies and the state is to participate in the achievement of regional priority goals insofar

as these are in line with national planning. A planning contract ("contract de plan") between the state and the relevant region is to be the preferential instrument in this context.

The devolution of state authority in the field of vocational training planning initiated in recent years (see 4.6.2) can be interpreted as an attempt, from the perspective of the steering of the vocational education system, to find a level of planning and decision-making bodies more adequately oriented towards regional problems.

Three overriding functions remain within the scope of the state, i.e. state educational planning (BLONDEL, 1987; D'IRIBARNE/LEMAITRE, 1987):

- to coordinate the more or less decentrally planned measures;

- to contribute to a reduction of imponderables in planning by conducting research and

- on the basis of a long-term vision of economic and social development, to balance out contradictory economic and social objectives as far as possible.

4.6.2. Decentralisation of state competence

The Law of 7 January 1983 transferred a series of competences from the central government to the 23 French

regions. These included vocational training, in particular apprentice training (above all technical and financial control of the apprentice training centres), the construction and maintenance of the "lycées", including the vocational secondary schools, and continuing vocational training.

All in all, however, the state continues to dominate the organisation of vocational training in the regions. For example, the state retains full responsibility for teaching staff and pedagogics in the field of school-based vocational education. Similarly, the apprenticeship training centres are still subject to the pedagogic supervision of the state. The state also retains competence for action programmes on supraregional or priority problems of vocational training (e.g. vocational training schemes for youngsters). And, last but not least, the state influences the vocational training policy of the regions by the allocation of their funds; the state budget for vocational training in the regions is much higher than that of all the regions put together (15 000 million compared to 4 000 million francs in 1986).

Every year the "Regional Council" ("Conseil Régional") draws up a programme for the development of apprentice training and continuing vocational training; it has a regional training fund ("Fonds régional de la formation et de l'apprentissage") at its disposal for this purpose. This fund is chiefly fed by state financial allocations and regional tax returns. The region may also receive

additional financial support from the state by concluding an agreement with the latter on joint regional action programmes in he field of vocational training and capital projects("Contrat de plan").

It is necessary to differentiate between decentralisation, i.e. the transfer of competences from central government to the regions, departments, municipal and local authorities, and the " deconcentration of state administation", i.e. the transfer of competences from ministries and central government to subordinate regional authorities. A more flexible and effective management of regional problems is to be achieved by the transfer of funds and decision-making competences to these subordinate authorities.

As far as the scope of the Ministry of Education is concerned, in the first phase of deconcentration additional competences were transferred to the regional supervisory authorities, i.e. the "Recteur" at regional level, the "Inspecteur d'Académie" at departmental level and head of establishment at school level. For example, the "Recteur", responsible, among others, for the personnel and pedagogical supervision of the vocational secondary schools, is given a certain quota of teaching posts and teaching units by the Ministry with which he can swiftly react to any change in the requirements of his region (MINISTERE DE L'EDUCATION NATIONALE, 1986). A further example of the expansion of scope at local level is the establishment of the "complementary training

measures at local level", described in section 4.3.3.

The processes of decentralisation and deconcentration are as yet by no means complete; their long-term development is nevertheless difficult to assess. When the Chirac government took over the reins of power, it ordered a "pause" in the decentralisation policy introduced by the preceding "left-wing" governments under President Mitterand. Persons interviewed by the author voiced the opinion that the optimal balance between centralised and decentralised decision-making structures has not yet been found.

Representatives of the regions deplore, on the one hand, an imbalance between the tasks shifted to their competence and the financial resources provided to this end; on the other hand, the administrative and financial dichotomy between the competences of the state and the regions, characteristic of the present status of decentralisation, are regarded as an essential handicap to further reform of the vocational training system (e.g. SISSON, 1987). There is moreover the question of the dual structure of state competence: the scope of the Ministry of Education for school-based vocational education and that of the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs for apprentice training (insofar as it does not involve its pedagogical control) and continuing vocational training, including vocational training schemes for jobless youngsters. This creates a complex structure of partial competences for vocational training at regional level which causes

duplication of responsibilities and competition between the various agencies concerned, and poses an obstacle to a uniform regional vocational training policy.

This situation, often criticised as a "jungle institutionnelle" leads to a serious need for coordination between agencies and the regions. A number of coordination bodies - mainly tripartite in form, i.e. comprised of representatives of the state/regions, employers' associations and unions - have therefore been set up at regional and national level. Apart from interministerial, departmental and local coordination bodies, the following deserve particular mention (D'IRIBARNE/LEMAITRE, 1987):

- the "Comité régional de la formation professionnelle, de la promotion sociale et de l'emploi", with the task of coordinating state measures targeted towards the region with measures implemented by the region itself;

- the national "Comité de coordination des programmes régionaux d'apprentissage et de formation professionnelle continue", which is to contribute to the coordination of the measures of all the regions and those implemented by the state; its coordinating function is however limited by the fact that only twelve seats are provided for the 23 regions in this body. Moreover the representatives of the regions are elected politicians who at the same time represent political parties.

- the "Conseil de gestion du fonds de la formation professionnelle et de la promotion sociale", responsible for the distribution of the funds of the "Fonds de la formation professionelle et de la promotion sociale". This fund was estblished to finance the priority measures of the state in the field of vocational training. The body also gives its opinion on regional requests for state funding. With the exception of school-based training, which falls under the budget of the Ministry of Education, the state may not fund any measures in the field of vocational training without the approval of this body. These functions overlap to a certain degree with those of the above-mentioned national coordination budy.

In the opinion of D'IRIBARNE/LEMAITRE (1987), the increase in the number of coordination bodies at regional level does not necessarily imply an improvement of coordination. These authors believe that - on the contrary, in particular the social partners will soon come up against the limits of their capacity in terms of persons available for participation in this body which shall perforce tip the balance in favour of the administration.

4.6.3. Participation of the social partners

The weight of the social partners in the shaping and steering of the initial vocational training system is considerably less than that of their counterparts in the Federal Republic of Germany. This can be primarily explained

by the fact that vocational education is chiefly implemented within the state school system. The social partners have basically only an advisory role, whereby the employers' side can bring greater weight to bear. This is,on the one hand,due to the fact that the employers' side has a better organisational structure and more funds for the organisation and representation of its interests. On the other hand, only a small proportion of employees are unionised - and the trend is downward. According to a comparative study, the unionisation rate in France in 1985 stood at 14.5 % (17.3 % in 1980; 34.3 % in 1985, 36.8 % in 1980 in the Federal Republic of Germany) (VISSER, 1987). Moreover this power potential is spread over five separate unions (CGT, CFDT, CFT-FO, CFTC, CFE-CGC) and the teachers' union, FEN, which often adopt different positions on vocational training issues and only partly coordinate their strategies.

At the level of the Ministry of Education there are two bodies in which the social partners can voice their opinion on the organisation of vocational education, the "Commissions professionnelles consultatives" (CPC) and the "High Commission for Education and the Economy" (HCEE), founded in 1986. Reference has been made to the participation of the social partners in regional and national coordination bodies concerning vocational training in the previous section.

The main task of the "Commissions professionnelles consultatives" is to advise the Ministry of Education on the

establishment of new vocational training certificates and the revision, abolition or restructuring of previous certificates. The CPC's deal with all vocational training diplomas below university level, i.e. from the CAP to the BTS. The diplomas are applicable to all existing training paths (school/alternance, state/private initial training/ further training). The currently 19 committees are as a rule related to a particular field of economic activity (e.g. metalworking, construction)[1]. Each committee is comprised of 40 members, ten from the employers' side, ten from the unions, ten representing the state (ministries, school supervisory authorities, ONISEP[2], CEREQ[3]) and finally ten representing other groups (teachers' unions, the Chambers, parents' organisations). Sub-committees are set up for large branches of economic activity. The initiative for the elaboration or restructuring of diplomas essentially come from the employer side and the Ministry of Education, and seldom from the trade unions.

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1) There are considerations in the Ministry of Education to render the structure of the CPC's less sectoral in the future to take better account of the trend towards cross-sectoral occupations. A number of sectors, e.g. the construction industry, are nevertheless opposed to these reform plans.

2) Office national d'information sur les enseignements et les professions

3) Centre d'études et de recherches sur les qualifications. On the tasks and research of this body, the French counterpart of the Bundesinstitut für Berufsbildung, cf. Koch, 1988.

According to union representatives, the fact that the unions scarcely have the necessary funds to commission scientific analyses of their own plays a role in this context. Moreover continued payment of the wages of the union representatives in the CPC's is not secured by law.

A draft initiative proposing reforms submitted to the Ministry of Education or the CPC secretary general is dealt with in two phases. Following a preliminary selection procedure, it is firstly submitted to the appropriate committee for examination of its expedience. The occupational skills for the envisaged field of activity and the examination requirements are then stipulated - usually in small working parties - in a second phase. The substantive groundwork for both phases is carried out by internal Ministry working groups, which also draw from the scientific expertise of the CEREQ. The social partners are not represented in these so-called "groupes des enseignements technologiques", a fact which has prompted criticism on their part. Above all the unions feel that they are frequently presented with "faits accomplis", but employers' representatives also complain that their opinion is not always given due consideration either. Differences in opinion between the social partners or between the social partners and the Ministry of Education do not necessary provoke delays in the decree of new training certificates since the social partners merely have the right of consultation. This explains why employers are sometimes loath to accept certain diplomas. In a report to the Prime Minister (RIBOUD, 1987, p. 140), it

was proposed, with reference to practice in the Federal Republic of Germany, that the social partners be given more than merely a consultative function in the revision of vocational training certificates and that educational practitioners from industry also be included in the process.

Following a series of procedural improvement in the wake of widespread criticism of the time necessary for the elaboration of a new diploma, the CPC Secretary General states that this process currently takes an average of one year. Moreover, training regulations are in future to be reviewed at least every five years.

Coordination and deliberation between the social partners and the state on more global problems with reference to the reform of vocational education concerning the CPC's as a whole take place within the "Comité interprofessionnel consultatif" (CIC) which meets on a relatively regular basis, approx. six times per year.

The task of the "High Commission for Education and the Economy"is to submit proposals to the Minister of Education on the further development of vocational education and above all on the forging of closer links between school and industry. This commission is comprised of twelve persons from the employers' and unions' side and twelve experts appointed from the world of work.

D'IRIBARNE/LEMAITRE (1987, p. 103) observe a clear trend

in France towards a reinforcement of the role of the social partners in the definition of the aims of vocational training, whereby however the consultation dimension will presumably continue to dominate in the future.

5. Are the French and German vocational education systems coming closer together?

The dual system of vocational education in the Federal Republic of Germany is frequently regarded as a model for the future development of the French vocational training system. Particular emphasis is laid on the commitment of German industry in the field of vocational education and the broad social consensus with regard to the dual vocational education system which, it is felt, is an essential factor to explain why problems of transition from training to working life and youth unemployment are not as severe in Germany as in France.

A comparison of recent trends in the vocational education systems of both countries would initially seem to indicate that they are coming closer together. In France, for example, there is the increasing importance of practical in-firm training and forms of school/industry sandwich courses, whereby industrial apprenticeship which has recently received a substantial political push, is closest to the "modèle allemand". In this context, one must also mention the newly created vocational "baccalauréat", of which the principle of alternance education is a constituent feature.

In the Federal Republic of Germany, on the one hand, one can observe an increasing importance of school-based places of learning - apart from the Berufsschule, these include intercompany training workshops and school-based

learning resources in industry (training workshops, simulated company offices, etc.). This tendency in the Federal Republic of Germany is essentially promoted by new information and producation techniques, the management of which can only be imparted at the workplace to a limited degree. The workplace nevertheless remains an indispensable learning resource for the acquisition of practical vocational action-related skills in the Federal Republic of Germany. Recent increased endeavours to secure and increase the learning relevance of practical on-the-job training by new forms of teaching and learning are to be viewed in this context.

Such convergent developments should however not conceal the fact that the two vocational education systems cannot be expected to approach each other substantially in the forseeable future. The basic strucutres of vocational education for skilled blue- and white-collar workers in the Federal Republic of Germany and France, developed over the course of history and each embedded in a specific social context, are too different for this to be the case. For this reason various French sources have been warning that the German "dual system" cannot be simply copied and in this context reference is made to its problems and deficiencies. In the opinion of persons interviewed by the author, the German vocational education system tends to over-concentrate on company-specific training contents, neglecting more general and future-oriented contents. The Economic and Social Council (C.E.S., 1987 c, p. 79) consider that vocational training practice in the Federal

Republic of Germany can at best offer indications as to how the - in its view absurd - demarcation between school, as a place for theory, and the company, as a place for practice, can be better overcome in France. On this point, it should be noted that in the Federal Republic of Germany the traditional demarcation between practical in-firm training and theoretical learning in the Berufsschule has not yet been overcome to the degree which is to be desired.

Although various sources call for greater involvement of industry in vocational education, there are a welter of institutional and political obstacles to a development in the direction of a dual vocational training system. On the one hand, there are forces in the school sector which are largely in favour of the present vocational education monopoly of state schools being retained. On this point they agree with those representatives of industry who continue to be of the opinion that vocational education is fundamentally the task of the state or that the participation of industry should be at least funded by the state. Moreover at present the vast majority of French companies do not yet fulfill the necessary conditions in terms of personnel, facilities or experience to be able to implement a qualitatively high level of vocational education.

Finally, a most decisive obstacle presumably lies in the fact that in France in-school theoretical education still largely enjoys greater prestige in the eyes of society than

in-firm practical education training; this applies, not only to parents, youngsters and teachers, but also to the personnel policy of many companies.

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Mr. Bertrand	CEREQ
Ms. Blondel	CEREQ Director (until 31.12.1987).
Mr. Bouyx	Secretary General
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Ms. Jourdan	Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs
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Mr. Lafosse-Marin	CNPF (French employers' association)
Mr. Moisy	O.N.I.S.E.P.
Mr. Poyard	CGT
Mr. Rozot	Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs
Mr. Verdier	CEREQ

Ms. Vuillet	Inspector General, Ministry of Education, member of the "High Commission for Education and the Economy".

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Vocational education in France — Structural problems and present efforts towards reform

Richard Koch

CEDEFOP Document

Luxembourg: Office for Official Publications of the European Communities

1989 — XI, 103 pp. — 21.0 × 29.7 cm

DE, EN, FR

ISBN 92-825-9198-0

Catalogue number: HX-54-88-110-EN-C

Price (excluding VAT) in Luxembourg: ECU 5

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Price (excluding VAT) in Luxembourg: **ECU 5**

ISBN 92-825-9198-0

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